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ANTHONY GIDDENS:

A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism. Vol. 1. Power, Property and the State. 240pp. Macmillan. £12.95 (paperback, £24.95). 0 333 09711 5

Anthony Giddens's latest book marks a new departure. From a series of wide-ranging studies of modern social theories and methodological orientations in the social sciences he has now proceeded to a close and sustained examination of one particular theory, that of Marx, which has been the object in the past two decades of extraordinarily animated debates, of frequent reinterpretations, criticisms and defences. In this first part of his project (a second volume, on the transition from capitalism to socialism, is to appear) Giddens chooses two main features of the theory for critical scrutiny: the notion of economic determinism, and the evolutionism inherent in Marx's general conception of history.

The first of these has long been a matter of inconclusive debate, at least since Engels sought, in several letters written in the 1890s, to qualify the notion of a strict one-sided determination of the whole of social life by economic, or even ultimately technological, factors (ie, the "forces of production"), by formulating the idea of "determination in the last instance" and of an interaction among all the elements of society - the economy and the various elements of the superstructure - in which "the economic movement finally asserts itself as necessary".

How Marx himself would have responded to the questions raised about the materialist conception of history, not only by critics but also as a result of the "amazing rubbish" (Engels) produced by some of his followers, we shall never know. Engels's own formulations were not systematically developed (this could hardly be expected in letters) and are open to various interpretations. It may be argued, for instance, that Engels is simply maintaining that the economy sets limiting conditions for the emergence of particular forms of the state, or of thought, thus allowing considerable and historically significant variations, and is not denying that these elements of the superstructure arise from independent sources and have an independent, though bounded, life. In one letter (to C. Schmidt, August 5, 1890) he seems, further, to minimize the extent to which he and Marx had actually constructed a theory of history, saying that "our conception of history is above all a guide to study", and "all history must be studied afresh" from this point of view. A recent defence of an old-fashioned historical materialism by G. A. Cohen (*Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence*, 1978) which adopts the view that "history is, fundamentally, the growth of human productive power, and forms of society rise and fall according as they enable or impede that growth", nevertheless says, in rather similar vein, that Marx offered "a theory to the extent that history admits of theoretical treatment, which is neither entirely nor not at all".

The discussion since Engels's day has not advanced very far in resolving this problem. Thus the recent structuralist Marxists, while rejecting the base/superstructure model and any kind of straightforward economic determinism, in favour of a structural model in which the economy is only one "level" or "instance" along with others (in particular, the political and ideological levels, which have a "relative autonomy"), nevertheless assert that the economic level is still the determining element "to the last instance". This simply repeats Engels's view without transforming it into a more rigorous and precise conception, and at the same time introduces a further difficulty: that of resolving the apparent contradiction between the idea of a total structure which determines its elements, and the ultimate determining effects of one of those elements.

Giddens criticizes historical materialism in a much more thoroughgoing way, along two lines. First, he distinguishes in structures of domination two factors - authority, which involves command over persons, and allocation, involving command over objects or material phenomena - which he treats as equally fundamental in the constitution of human societies. This view, set forth in the early chapters, acquires particular importance in his later discussion of the nation state and political order. Quite rightly, he points out that Marxists have seriously neglected the study of the nation state, though it is unduly harsh to say that no work on the subject comparable with Hilderbrand's *Finance Capital* in the economic field was produced; for Otto Bauer's *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie* (1907) was a major attempt to analyse the nation state and nationalism, largely forgotten precisely because of the prevailing neglect of this question and the more generally inhibiting influence of Bolshevik orthodoxy. Moreover, Giddens's argument about the importance of the nation state in the development of European capitalism has points of resemblance with Bauer's analysis. It is also worth noting that Hilderbrand in his last work, *Das historische Problem* (1941), also propounded a revision of Marxist theory which attributed to the state an independent role in the creation of the modern European societies.

At all events, Giddens's discussion of the state leads on to an excellent critical examination of the "relative autonomy of the state", which has been the object of much recent Marxist debate. Like many other social scientists he is disturbed by the vagueness of this conception and proposes sensibly that "relative autonomy" needs to be investigated in a more rigorous way, in specific historical circumstances. But a more radical criticism is posed by asking the question, "relative autonomy from what?", and by arguing that all power relations within social systems are characterized by both relative autonomy and relative dependence. From this standpoint the political order, "command over persons", is in exactly the same position as the economic order, "command over objects", and both may be, in particular conditions (whether short-term or long-term), more or less independent. Two broad conclusions seem to follow from this analysis: first, that in the process of structuring, mod-

ifying or destroying forms of society the conflicts between nations play a major part, along with those between classes; second, that within the modern capitalist nations, domination and exploitation, and the struggles against them, can and do arise also on the basis of other interests than those of class, as ethnic movements, the women's movement and a variety of radical social movements over the past two decades have demonstrated, while in the socialist nations power struggles take place which cannot easily, if at all, be accommodated in a traditional Marxist conception of class conflict.

There is also in Giddens's work another, more general, criticism of economic determinism - whether this is conceived as determination of the superstructure by the base, or as a structural determinism in which the economic level still retains a privileged place - which is manifest in his emphasis upon "human agency", defined as the action of "knowledgeable agents" who both construct the social world, in an interaction with nature, and are conditioned or constrained by the world they create. This is the central element in his concept of "structuration" (closely related, as he notes, to the Marxist concept of "praxis"), which also has many affinities with the idea of a "perpetual movement of destruction and reconstruction" expounded by Gurwitsch, with Piaget's "constructivism", and with Goldmann's "genetic structuralism". All these views could indeed be summed up in Marx's own statement (in the *Eighteenth Brumaire*) that "Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past."

The trouble with such conceptions is that they are too general and diffuse, and require further specification if they are to be of much use in the analysis of actual situations or events. A preliminary question concerns whether human agents are to be conceived only as individuals or whether they also include social groups (or "collective subjects" as Goldmann calls them). If the latter, then we encounter such familiar problems as those of class consciousness and the role of a political party supposed to embody or represent that class consciousness; in relation to an objectively given or structurally determined class (the question which preoccupied Lukács in theory and

Lenin in practice); or in another direction, that posed by the theory of elites (though here there is in any case a strong emphasis upon social or biological determinism) or by the conception of "creative minorities" (Toynbee). In fact, most of those who propose to allow for human agency as well as structural conditioning are led to give greater weight to the latter, as is the case with Goldmann, who in general relates cultural creations to objectively constituted classes. Giddens himself, in discussing present-day capitalist societies in the latter part of his book, provides a structural analysis of these societies, mainly in terms of class relations and class conflict, and does not introduce at any point an account of how human agency has affected the outcome.

If, on the other hand, human agency is taken to mean only individual action, we find ourselves confronting once again the old question of the "role of the individual in history", which usually takes the form of considering the rôle of "superior individuals", "heroes", "charismatic leaders" and the like. Plekhanov, in an essay with this title (*The Role of the Individual in History*, 1898) long ago examined the problem as it was posed by nineteenth-century historians and their critics, citing in particular Saint-Simon's objections to Mignet's *History of the French Revolution* (a work which he saw as representative of the "fatalist" school of historiography), to the effect that the course of events would have changed had Mirabeau not died of fever, or had Robespierre or Bonaparte died earlier. In short, the course and outcome of the Revolution was also determined by minor and elusive phenomena, either accidental or belonging to a different order of causality. It is easy enough to think of more recent similar cases. Would the October Revolution in Russia have occurred without Lenin? Would Trotsky or Bukharin, in place of Stalin, have led it to a different outcome? Would the German revolutionary movement of 1918-19 have been successful if a more heroic or charismatic leader had appeared on the scene?

Plekhanov's answer to Saint-Simon was that the minor causes had to do only with the "personal qualities of individuals" which make them "more or less fit to satisfy those social needs which arise out of the given economic relations". Broadly, the argument is that the social needs must eventually be satisfied, and hence that there are long-

term trends, conditioned or determined by economic relations, which must be distinguished from the short-term occurrences in which, for the moment, such needs endeavour to find satisfaction. This seems a plausible view if we consider, say, the transition from feudalism to capitalism, or the stages in the development of capitalism from the nineteenth century to the present time. And it is far from being only a Marxist view. Max Weber also regarded the development of modern Western capitalism, the rationalization of life, the growth of bureaucracy, a "mechanical petrification", as a more or less inexorable fate, and he was far from confident that even a "charismatic leader" could alter the general course of events.

Such arguments depend upon the kind of distinction made more elaborately by the *Annales* school of historians between the short term, the conjuncture, and the long term; and it follows from them that a sociological theory of history (of which Marxism is one form) can have as its object only the long term, though it may also provide a necessary framework of ideas within which short-term or conjunctural phenomena can be made more intelligible. Even if this be accepted, however, a question remains about the nature and scope of such a theory of history, and this constitutes Giddens's second main theme. His argument for rejecting Marx's "evolutionism" differs substantially from other critical evaluations of historical materialism; for example, Weber's claim that every attempt to formulate an interpretation of universal history rests upon a value standpoint, and that there are many equally valid standpoints, or Habermas's revision of the theory ("Toward a Reconstruction of Historical Materialism" in *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, 1979) which involves complementing Marx's concept of social labour by the ideas of family organization and norms of action, both crucially dependent upon language, and then substituting for the idea of a unilinear history of the species, a conception of the increasing complexity of societies which allows not only for multilinear development but also for regressions.

Giddens's criticism of evolutionary theories generally in the social sciences, on the ground that the central idea of "adaptation" is not explanatory, is also directed against Marx, though, as he partly recognizes, it may not be very cogent here, since for Marx it is not a question of adaptation but of an active human intervention in nature. His principal argument against historical materialism, set out very briefly and supported by a general reference to recent archaeological and anthropological evidence, is that a "serious question mark" has been placed "against the thesis that the drive to mastery of the material environment (and the creation of material surplus) governs major phases of societal transformation".

This is not a very strong argument. First, archaeologists and anthropologists differ in their views, and there are many who would contest the claim that there is conclusive, or even strong, evidence against Marx's thesis. Second, the drive to master the material environment, which is essential up to a certain point for survival, should not be confused with a drive to increase the material surplus as much as possible. All that a Marxist theory of evolution requires is that a more effective mastery of the environment does confer an advantage upon one society over others with which it may come into contact and conflict; and Marx himself (in the *Grundrisse*) emphasized the importance of war, and the acquisition of additional land and labour (the emergence of slavery and serfdom), in the development of early communities. Beyond the primitive stage, in city states or early empires, there is, of course, an increasing drive to enlarge the "plus", though Marx would not have dissented at all from the idea (which



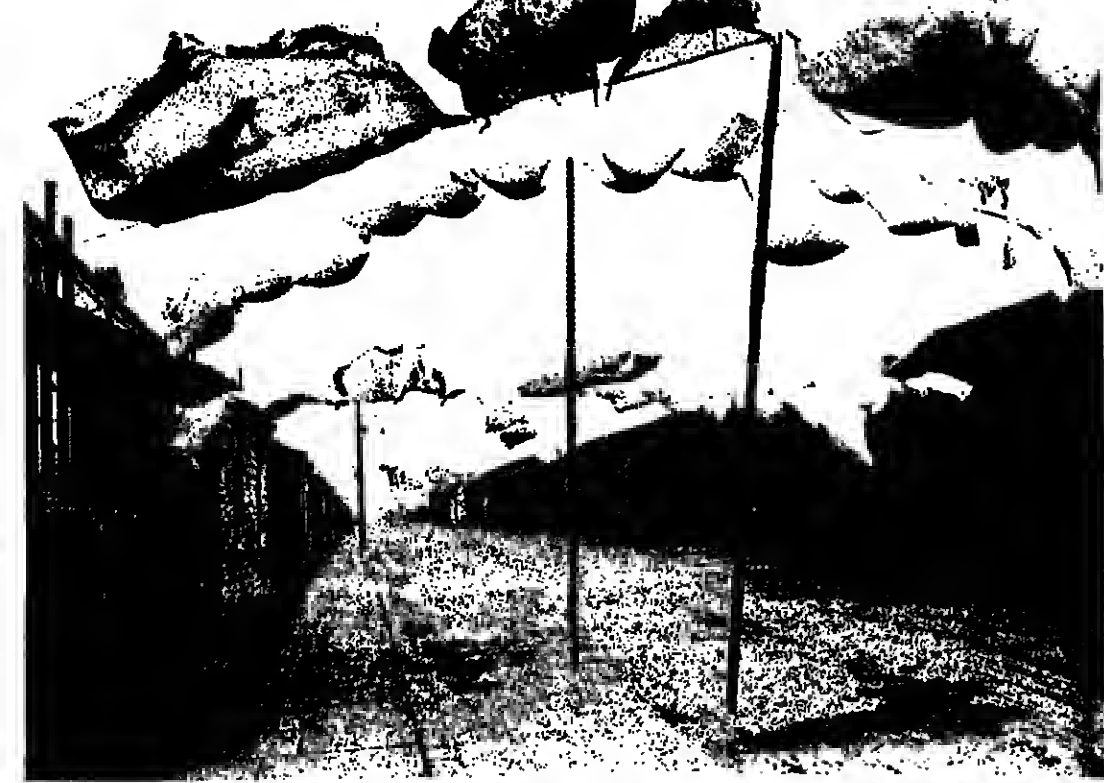
Mass-observation and minute scrutiny. In 1937 Humphrey Spender was invited by Toyn Harrison, the co-founder with Charles Madge of Mass-Observation, to take photographs in Bolton and its holiday "extension", Blackpool, as part of their "Worktown" project which aimed to record everyday life in a Northern industrial town. *Worktown People: Photographs from Northern England 1937-38* (128pp, *Pulling Wall Press, Lawford St, Bristol* £7.95, 0 905046 20 X), edited with an introduction by Jeremy Bluford, includes over a hundred of Spender's photographs and an interview with him.

he was indeed the first to formulate as part of systematic historical theory that only with the advent of capitalism, in Giddens's words, "is there established a constant emphasis upon, and capacity for, the chronic expansion of the forces of production".

There is, to be sure, much controversy among Marxists themselves about the exact routes taken by human societies in emerging from the earliest tribal communities, and the later sequence of stages; and even some recognition of that "unique" character of Western capitalism which preoccupied Weber. None of this, however, contradicts the fundamental thesis of historical materialism that social development is essentially connected with the growth of human productive powers. If Marx's theory of history, or any alternative general theory, is to be given up, then we must either confine ourselves to the short term and to narrative history, or else adopt the kind of intermediate position which Giddens, partially in accord with Weber and with some of his later followers, advocates in the form of "episodic characterizations" of particular long-term transformations (for example, the emergence of class-divided societies from tribal communities, or the transition from feudalism to capitalism).

But this conception, although it does have the merit of providing a framework for considering, say, the question of a transition from capitalism to socialism as the major transformation of its own. How, for instance, are we to define the "episodes" themselves? Is some general criterion involved? To take a particular case, should we distinguish as one episode a transition from feudalism to capitalism, or rather the advent of industrial society, as some social scientists would prefer? Furthermore, since the episodes selected are very often the stages differentiated in Marx's theory, how strong is the argument against attempting to link the episodes together in a series, perhaps in a new way?

This indicates a more general problem arising from the very numerous critical reassessments of Marx's economic interpretation. The criticisms, of diverse kinds, have undoubtedly drawn attention to serious difficulties, though many of them are such as confront any sociological theory. But will the outcome be a heavily revised Marxist theory, which is one prospect held out by much recent work, or an entirely new theory, equal or superior in its scope and explanatory (or at least illuminative) power? Of the latter there is as yet all too little sign.



Monday's washing: billowing blinding for the streets of Bolton, photographed by Humphrey Spender (see the caption on p 271 for publication details).

Extending the Republic

By Kenneth S. Lynn

REGINALD HORSMAN

Race and Manifest Destiny
The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism
367pp. Harvard University Press.
\$15.75.
0 674 74572 8

Self-criticism is now so rampant in American culture that many historians simply cannot deal with the principal achievements of the American past unless they can think of ways to discredit them. A case in point is Reginald Horsman's *Race and Manifest Destiny*, which would have us believe that the nation's most spectacular accomplishment in the first half of the nineteenth century, to wit, the extension of its principles of free democratic republicanism across the width of an entire continent, was first and foremost a victory for a racist ideology of quasi-Hitlerian viciousness.

In Mr Horsman's judgment the United States in 1800 was a much less prejudiced society than it would shortly become. Both Christian doctrine and Enlightenment thought confirmed the belief of Jefferson and his contemporaries that mankind consisted of one human species, and that the physical differences between peoples, as well as the differences in their levels of civilization, were the result of environment. If the leaders of opinion in post-Revolutionary America relegated blacks to a fixed and lower racial category, they thought of the Indians in their midst as fellow human beings who could and should be taught to improve themselves, until finally their habits and customs would become indistinguishable from those of white American farmers. As for the new nation's attitude towards admitting strangers from Europe, a society that had been formed by the descendants of English, Dutch, Scottish, Irish, German, and Swedish immigrants had no qualms about keeping its doors wide open. Jefferson's America saw itself, in sum, as a vast laboratory, in which religious and scientific ideas about the unity of mankind would be vindicated in practice.

By 1830, the generous views of the founding fathers had been all but swept away by "an emotional tide of racial theory". On the basis of evidence ranging from supposedly exact scientific measurements of cranial cavities to impressionistic studies of cultural variation, a number of European writers had been arguing for decades that there were "intelligent" differences between races. When Gobineau published his *Essai sur l'Inégalité des Races*

Humaines in 1854, he drew on more than half a century of European literature on the subject. That American thinkers changed their minds about the unity of mankind was partly because European thinkers had, too.

Yet Horsman stresses that "the peculiarities of the American experience" endowed the American acceptance of the arguments of racialist racial destiny with a "unique" fervour. What first caused the American people to become interested in the idea that the white race was innately superior to all others, and that Anglo-Saxons like themselves (l) were the *crème de la crème*, was the presence of the Indian. For the dream of uplifting this semi-ferocious creature had given way to the desire to strip him of his valuable lands, and it was easier to do so if one believed that he was nothing but a wild beast who could not possibly be domesticated. In an absurd philosophy of racism, white America found the perfect rationale for its savage dispossession of the allegedly savage red man.

Racist ideas were also embraced by the masters of Negro slaves, and they furnished ammunition as well to bigots who wished to restrict immigration. The heyday of racism did not arrive, however, until it became necessary to find sanction for a series of assaults on Mexico. The United States' annexation of Texas and its seizure of California were stunning blows to the Mexicans, but as long as the Americans could blame the Mexicans' suffering on their own racial

weakness, rather than on what Horsman refers to as the "whites' relentless search for wealth and power", the conscience of the victorious nation was untroubled. "Manifest Destiny", Horsman says, was the slogan of a malevolent ideology that assigned non-Anglo-Saxon races to an inferior human status in order to justify American imperialism. Some imperialists believed that the United States should be content to be the principal power on the North American continent; others talked of a hemispheric hegemony stretching from pole to pole; still others argued for a thrust into the Pacific as well. But no matter how the limits of its territorial ambitions were defined, the American super-race was bloodily committed to "exploitation and destruction".

The thinkers who assigned intellectual and moral characteristics to races were making a scientific system out of stereotypes; they were reducing real men and women to caricatures. Horsman, of course, has no regard for racist science. Yet in his own way he is, no less misleadingly simplistic.

To begin with, *Race and Manifest Destiny* vastly underestimates the difficulties that racist doctrines created for a Bible-reading nation. How could the idea of a superior, separate race be reconciled with the story of one human species descended to just a few thousand years from Adam and Eve? Horsman's answer is that "the logical inconsistencies and contradictions were ignored", but the truth is that

they were not. Some scientists sought to avoid a direct attack on the Bible by arguing that although God had originally made Adam and Eve, He had interposed Himself in later epochs in order to permit racial diversity. The Bible, however, referred to Genesis, not polygenesis, and every ingenious attempt to resolve the conflict between science and religion was confounded by that fact. As a result, early nineteenth-century Americans could not escape from ambivalence. Caught between their eagerness to accept the latest scientific word about racial differences and their inability to disbelieve the biblical account of the Creation, they followed a waverer course in both thought and deed.

Horsman, alas, is more interested in pursuing straight lines. He points out that a vigorous movement to restrict immigration sprang up in the mid-1840s, but neglects to add that no policy of restriction was enacted into law. He cites the influential opinion of the theologian Theodore Parker that the American was innately inferior to the Caucasian, but fails to refer to a best-selling novel called *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which insisted that all human beings were the same in the sight of the Lord. He marshals a number of literary quotations that express contempt for the bestial Indian, but never once makes mention of the noble red men in Fenimore Cooper's enormously popular *Leatherstocking Tales*.

It is, however, in his central argument that Mr Horsman most fully displays his unwillingness to deal with historical complexity. For in interpreting Manifest Destiny ideology solely as a racist philosophy he strips it of its political and economic appeal. No historian can possibly account for the impact of Manifest Destiny on the American imagination unless he conceives of it, as the late Frederick Merk did some years ago in a marvellous book called *Mission and Manifest Destiny*, as the greatest of all reform programmes of the reform-minded 1840s.

Into the lands taken from Mexico and ceded by Britain, the Imperial Americans brought a set of ideals very different from those which the British took with them: to India or the French to southwest Asia. A free, confederate, self-governing republic, three thousand miles wide; that was the basic vision that informed Manifest Destiny ideology, and eight propositions were subsumed under it:

- 1) Individual freedom and local autonomy.
- 2) Religious freedom, albeit there was some disagreement among the leading ideologues about how to handle the overwhelmingly Catholic population of the American Southwest.
- 3) Social egalitarianism. Master Destiny envisaged a kingdom without a king, or an aristocracy or hereditary privilege, or the distinctions of any kind.
- 4) Political democracy, based on wide suffrage, free elections, and limits on Presidential power. There was no room for dictatorial Mexican or otherwise, in the Manifest Destiny scheme.
- 5) Power in the people in economic as well as political terms. The chiefs of Spanish land barons were overwhelmed by the transatlantic westward of the Jeffersonian ideal of the yeoman farmer.
- 6) Access to government-owned land on easy-payment terms. Some of the more audacious Manifest Destiny reformers even talked of the homesteads. In any event, the spectacle of people starving for sight of follow land - which in the late of Irish peasants in the 1840s - would not be permitted to take place in the American West.
- 7) Economic democracy to business affairs as well as in agriculture. The spokesmen for Manifest Destiny were advocates of free-market competition, both at home and abroad. Professor Merk points out in this regard that in 1845, at the flood-tide of Manifest Destiny sentiment, the US Congress passed the Walker Tariff which for the first time lowered tariff barriers to the point where the United States was almost engaged in free trade.
- 8) New homes for political refugees and other hard-pressed peoples from Europe. "Long live our country prove itself the asylum of the oppressed," said a Destiny-minded Alabama Congressman in 1845. "Let its harbours and its people be extended far and wide, and when the waters of despotism shall have dated other portions of the globe and the votary of liberty be expelled to betake himself to the ark, let this government be the ark on which it shall rest."

A racist rhetoric also helped to justify Manifest Destiny. There can be no denying this fact. On the other hand, the power of this rhetoric was considerably offset by a counter-revolutionary rhetoric. But far more important than the issue of whether the American people did or did not consider themselves a special, superior race is the fact that Manifest Destiny was a mighty engine of democratic reform, by means of which a capitalist nation avoided the dangers of colonialism. America's advance to the Pacific constituted only one of the great achievements in the history of human freedom. It is a sign of times in which we live that *Manifest Destiny* has been turned into an anti-American story into an anti-American

JAY FELLOWS:

Ruskin's Maze
Mastery and Madness in His Art
284pp. Clarendon: Princeton University Press. £17.60.
0 910 08479 2

ROBERT HEWISON (Editor):

New Approaches to Ruskin
Thirteen Essays
229pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £10.95.
0 7100 0915 1

JOHN DIXON HUNT and FAITH M. HOLLAND (Editors):

The Ruskin Polygon
Essays on the Imagination of John Ruskin
284pp. Manchester University Press. £10.
0 7190 0834 4

JOHN DIXON HUNT:

The Wilder Sea
A Life of John Ruskin
512pp. Dent. £15.95.
0 480 04547 4

"Visible infinities" - the phrase is Carlyle's, but it usefully characterizes Ruskin's obsessive preoccupation with the absolute and the contingent, the general truth and the detail, the vision and the particularity. The man who wrote "the greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to see something, and tell what he saw in a plain way.... To see clearly is poetry, prophecy and religion", certainly believed that the infinite was contained in the visible, and thus that the function of the art critic was to be far more than that of pictorial insight, happy juxtapositions, a genuine sympathy with Ruskin's mode of thought; on the other hand, an unflinching self-indulgence, unRuskinian lapses into the obscurity of jargon, so that the reader has to lose control entirely and submit himself to the experience of reading, or in Bloom's term "struggling" with, Fellows.

This sort of abject surrender is not one Ruskin himself ever required of his readers. His didacticism, his clarity and his very carefully defined relationship with these readers, whether the working men of England or the undergraduate audience at a Slade lecture, were all part of the tense superstructure of rationality Ruskin needed to impose upon his national superstructure to a great extent, and in the process he ceases to read or interpret Ruskin, and begins to parody the inner movement of Ruskin's subconscious mind. That it is possible to do this tells us something valuable about Ruskin, even though Fellows's method *in extenso* is, in my opinion, self-defeating. It reminds us that under the rational, analytical rhetoric, the earnest desire to instruct and improve others, Ruskin's was a creative rather than a critical imagination. Moving towards synthesis, but failing to find what Coleridge calls "its appropriate form", Ruskin produces a curious hybrid, a sort of intellectual and spiritual autobiography - perhaps even more on autobiography of the imagination, of which all his books are part. Both Arrowsmith in his essay, and Fellows in his book, are refining on the process that Ruskin himself initiated, not applying a different discipline to it. There is a danger that this may become second-hand in the last resort; better surely to read Ruskin himself than to read a critic doing what he did, and inevitably not doing it so well.

Turner and Turner only could follow, and render... that mystery of decided line, that distinct, sharp, visible but unintelligible and inextinguishable richness, which, examined part by part, is to the eye nothing but confusion and defeat; but which, taken as a whole, is all unity, symmetry and truth. In "The Truth of Space" he attributes the same qualities to Nature herself. "Nature is never distinct and never vacant, always mysterious but always abundant; you always see something, but you never see all." This perception is very much of his. What Alice Meynell, in her excellent and much neglected *John Ruskin* (1900) calls "his command of numerous 'truths' is a Coleridgean awareness of dynamic growth in the inner and the outer worlds of thought and nature. To the romantic mind the multiplicity of the world is of a different sort from the plenitude and abundance perceived by earlier periods. It is not pre-ordained, pre-organized and controlled by a beneficent Creator. The artist himself must dominate it, in some way without falsifying it; he must perceive its organic unity. Through observation and perception, through the association of visible infinities, he must recognize its ultimate design.

Several of the essays in John Dixon Hunt's and Faith Holland's collection, *The Ruskin Polygon*, deal with Ruskin's articulation - reticulation might be the better word - of certain motifs or images. William Arrowsmith's "Ruskin's Fireflies" is the most subtle and elaborate of these, and, exhilarating though it is, towards the end comes a feeling that the infectious nature of Ruskin's confusion, as well as his enthusiasm, has its own dangers. The pursuit of an obsession through so many instances, the unravelling of so many associations can become wearisome, as may be seen in Jay Fellows's notorious attempt to write as Ruskin wrote, think as Ruskin thought, and with a kind of mad, inspired logic assume the whole Ruskinian burden of complexity. Ruskin's Maze repeats the tour de force of *The Failing Distance* and betrays the same virtues and vices: on the one hand flashes of insight, happy juxtapositions, a genuine sympathy with Ruskin's mode of thought; on the other hand, an unflinching self-indulgence, unRuskinian lapses into the obscurity of jargon, so that the reader has to lose control entirely and submit himself to the experience of reading, or in Bloom's term "struggling" with, Fellows.

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interesting contrast to the largely transatlantic character of *The Ruskin Polygon*.

How much cooler the English approach is in pursuit of the image and the association! Nick Shurmon, following up "Rust and Dust" in *Into the Last and Fors Claydon* compresses into a short and elegantly written essay influences on Ruskin's style and thought as familiar as Carlyle, as obscure as Arthur Phelps, and as unexpected as Dickens. He might even have reinforced his evidence for the last by citing Ruskin's essay *Fiction Fair and Foul*, where a brilliantly destructive attack on the morbidity of *Bleak House* is preceded in the opening paragraphs by an account of the suburban squalor of Dulwich which falls quite naturally into the cadences of Dickens's later style. Dinah Birch's essay on the science of *Proserpina* is written with a similar unpretentious lucidity. She teases out the associations of the various examples of flowers Ruskin chooses, their mythological significance, their association with death and therefore their curious analogical application to the affairs of Ruskin's own life, especially the death of Rose La Touche. There is some overlapping between the two books - among others, Brian Malden and Jeffrey Spear contribute to both, Malden usefully tracing Ruskin's later influence, and the role of the Severns in the latter part of his life and after his death. (It comes oddly, though, to find him referring to Lady Birkenhead, whose *Illustrations of Friends* constituted the first defence of the Severns' guardianship, as "Miss Birkenhead" throughout).

An excellent piece of analysis by John Rosenberg, whose involvement with Fors Claydon has always been particularly illuminating, and contributions by George Landow and Jeffrey Spear make Hewison's collection a substantial as well as an attractive contribution to Ruskin studies. The level of contribution to *The Ruskin Polygon* is more uneven, but Jeffrey Spear's expurgated selection from the Ruskin-Norton correspondence is important for the light it throws onto what must have been the closest of Ruskin's male friendships. Richard A. Mackessy's "Proust on the Margins of Ruskin" is a good introduction to the most fascinating and fruitful literary connection. The architectural contributions are original and authoritative, and the whole book (though it is appealingly overpriced) like Hewison's indicates the serious level at which studies of Ruskin are proceeding today.

Before the Second World War, details of Ruskin's life were gradually being discovered and assembled, and several biographies and semi-biographies had appeared, when, in 1949, the most substantial, intelligent and sympathetic of them, Derrick Leon's *Ruskin, the Great Victorian*, was published. Since then there has undoubtedly been a need for a new life which would take account of new discoveries: the facts that Helen Viljoen so laboriously collected about the Ruskin family; James Dearn's patient researches; the accounts by Mary Lutyens of Ruskin's marriage; the letters edited by Harold Shapiro and Van Alkne Burd; the latter's thorough and detailed account of the tragic relationship between Ruskin and Rose La Touche. All these new findings need to be brought together in the form of a re-assessment of Ruskin's life and work, and John Dixon Hunt has provided us with one which exhibits the qualities we have come to expect of him - an easy command of complicated material, a shrewd and sympathetic judgment, and a capacity to combine fluent narrative with a lucid and convincing exposition of an artist's life and his work.

The early stages of Ruskin's life are especially successfully treated in this biography. Professor Dixon Hunt restores *The Poetry of Architecture* to a proper place in our attention, stressing its imaginative power. His quotations from it are

By Rachel Trickett

interesting contrast to the largely transatlantic character of *The Ruskin Polygon*.

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immediately arresting - the strange deathly beauty of Italy with its cypress-haunted landscape; the brilliant Ruskinian flashes of perception (of a sunset "It was not colour; it was conflagration"); the early connexion in his mind between architecture and society as well as between architecture and the picturesque. But most impressive is Dixon Hunt's treatment of Ruskin's early relation with his parents and his marriage. He is discreet and generous in his account of the latter, scrupulously avoiding apportioning blame between Ruskin and Effie. The effect of his unpartisan approach is to make us understand the whole unhappy business much better. His suggestion that it was very likely Effie's period rather than the unexpected sight of public hair which disciplined Ruskin from condescending to the marriage on the wedding night, is persuasive. Ruskin's own childish egotism at this stage and his utter refusal to contemplate the idea of begetting children (who would interfere with his work), account for his continually deferring the full relationship. By the time even Ruskin must have begun to consider the state of their marriage abnormal, it was too late; encouraged by his father and mother, he had come actively to dislike Effie, and could see no possible reason for making love to her. The most he wanted was to have her out of his life. Dixon Hunt gives no support, however, to the idea Effie and Millais studiously fostered afterwards, that Ruskin had tried to encourage her to compromise herself with young men, Millais especially, in order to give her husband grounds for divorce. Ruskin was at once too

honest, too naïve and too self-absorbed to have detachedly and cunningly devised such a scheme. Instead he willingly submitted himself to the humiliation of an annulment, and behaved with conspicuous generosity to Millais after it.

No one ever comes well out of an account of an unhappy marriage and separation. Ruskin was deliberately insensitive to his young wife's feelings. His jealous and doting parents encouraged the growing coldness between the two of them. Effie undoubtedly deserves our sympathy at this stage. It was only later, and after her successful and happy marriage to Millais, that she revealed her essentially vindictive and trivial nature. She was happy enough to enjoy the social position marriage and the Ruskin's wealth gave her, but resentment had festered over the years, and must have originated in Ruskin's physical indifference and in his conduct baring out her, when she fell in love with Millais, into a potentially scandalous position though he took no advantage of it. Her communication with Mrs La Touche through Mrs Cowper-Temple is the most disgraceful episode in the whole miserable affair.

Dixon Hunt is less successful in dealing with the great crisis of Ruskin's life, his infatuation with Rose La Touche. This whole ten-year affair was characteristic of the self-absorption of Ruskin's nature; everything was referred back to it; it became in later life the clue to the maze of his imaginative being. Yet no clear picture emerges from this biography of the attraction she held for him (her mother had originally

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Secker & Warburg

been the appeal), or of her character and her motives or of his attraction for her. Van Aiken Burd's detailed study makes it difficult to add any facts, but Rose is too important a figure in Ruskin's imaginative - as well as in his real - life to be played down. This does not seem to be a deliberate ploy on Dixon Hunt's part. There is an effect of speeding up about his last chapters which suggests a finish against time. Ruskin's last phase, his relation with the Severns, for instance, does not come across nearly as vividly as his early life and relationships. This gives a slightly top-sided effect to the book, and there is a lack of reflection on other figures than Ruskin himself in the later phase which accounts for a mild sense of anti-climax.

Yet this is an important book and a good one. Ruskin is the ideal subject for biography, and there is room for further interpretative lives now that so much material has been unearthed and ordered. Though he was unattractive in character in so many ways, the extraordinary intellectual, self-loving and self-loathing, disappointed man, and the sheer capacity of his mind and imagination, have captured the sympathy of innumerable subsequent writers, scholars and readers. He possessed the power of inspiring others, and still does.

It comes at first as a shock to discover that Ruskin, not the more exquisite and aesthetic Pater, was the great influence on, indeed the master of, Proust. Yet there is almost an implied criticism of Pater in Proust's preface to his translation of *The Bible of Amiens* when he compares the photographs on his desk of the Mona Lisa and the Gilded Virgin of Amiens in her hawk-bow. The second, "has one quality not one only - the beauty that belongs to a masterpiece. The photograph close beside it of the Gilded Virgin breathes the melancholy of remem-



A commemorative postcard, showing Ruskin at various stages of his career and the Passionate Calina in Venice. From John Dixon Hunt's biography, reviewed on this page.

brance". The masterpiece is accomplished, in some sense over: the Virgin of Amiens is part of the texture of life, and it is this vital quality, with all its imperfections and contradictions and passionate prejudices that Proust loved in Ruskin. He writes of Ruskin's failures:

Even if we allow that Ruskin may sometimes have erred as a critic, in the precise value that he attached to any given work, the beauty of his wrong judgment is often more attractive than that of the work judged, and corresponds to that which, though it may be

different from that beauty, is no less precious.

John Unrau makes a similar point in his essay "Ruskin, the Workman, and the Savagery of Gothic", in *New Approaches to Ruskin*, where he exposes Ruskin's almost deliberate misreading of Gothic architecture in pursuit of an imaginative idea of "what all human labour might ideally become". Ruskin's errors, his faults, his contradictions have an authenticity, a close-up quality which is essentially alive. As Mill said of Coleridge, his is a seminal mind from which others can take, and make, as

the almost inexhaustible quarry of his work there is always something new to be found, something he had seen and plainly told.

It is ironic that the man who understood so much about the working of the human imagination never achieved a masterpiece. Equally ironic that the man who felt that he could not love, or communicate with others, can seem, in his private even more than his public utterances, to speak to us with absolute sincerity. Jeffrey Spear reproduces in *The Ruskin Polygon* the bleak, moving, honest letter Ruskin wrote to Nonon on hearing of the death of Nonon's wife, of whom he had been passionately jealous, fearing she would separate him from his friend:

My dearest Charles, What can I say to you - Life and Death - have long been to me as horrible dreams, - both of them. If I thought we could wake out of them I would try to make you think so too - but I think we only cease to dream. Day by day I think of you, and do no more. You know I cared for Susan - Will my saying so be any good to you? I am expecting any day, to hear that Rosie is dead - It would be no good to me though all the world were sorry too....

Do you remember Marie of the Giesbach? Her husband is just dead, and he was all in all to her. And the primroses come out all the same. But I am thankful for them nevertheless....

The frustrated love Ruskin suffered from broke out onto the visible world which he was thankful for, nevertheless, and communicates itself still to those who read him sympathetically. If only for this extraordinary gift, and in spite of his tragic, muffled life, Ruskin deserves Tolstoy's famous tribute, that he was "one of those rare men who think with their hearts".

Four troubled lives

By Peter France

RONALD HINGLEY:

Nightingale Fever
Russian Poets in Revolution
269pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
£12.95.
0 297 7902 8

"The Hero as Man of Letters", the dais which seemed to Carlyle "altogether a product of these new ages", is by now very familiar. Artists and poets are among our greatest heroes and martyrs. The Soviet Union, that land of heroes



Marina Tsvetaeva

and hero-worship, has a popular series of books called "Lives of Remarkable People" in which writers figure prominently, but not of course the four poets whose stories are told by Ronald Hingley in *Nightingale Fever*, Anna Akhmatova, Boris Pasternak, Osip Mandelstam and Marina Tsvetaeva. Four handsome young faces figure on the cover of the book, faces of men and women doomed to suffering or death by their "nightingale fever", an expression of Mandelstam meaning their inability to stop singing in conditions where singing brought disaster. Irony and levity are not absent from the book, but the four poets are all seen here as tragic heroes.

In 1930 the problem of hero-worship forced itself on Pasternak as he reflected on the suicide of the still young Mayakovsky. He saw in Mayakovsky the danger of the Romantic notion of "biography as spectacle" which he said was characteristic of his time. The idea of the poet who lays himself down as the measure of life, and pays for it with his life, was a powerful one, but it set up a false distinction between the poet and the non-poet, and laid too much stress on the life rather than the poetry. Later on, for all his love of privacy, Pasternak too was driven to a position of self-sacrifice as he took up a defiant public stance over *Doktor Zhivago* - this in the sense of his great poem "Hamlet". But he continued to proclaim that "it is an ugly thing to be famous" and that the poet should "leave blanks in his biography, not his work". And the showman Mayakovsky too prefaced his brief autobiography with the terse statement: "I am a poet. That is what is interesting about me."

To the question: "Why write the lives of poets?" one might then give the simple answer: to improve our reading of their poetry. But it would be a naive answer. Biography, whether of poets or politicians, can be a literary enterprise in its own right, and as such it attracts more readers than poetry. This is doubly true when the poetry in question is written in a language not understood by most readers of the biography. It is ironic that Nadezhda Mandelstam's splendid memoirs have probably appealed far more to the English-speaking public than her husband's poetry, even though this is their *raison d'être*.

Such are some of the useful reflections provoked by a reading of Ronald



Osip Mandelstam



Boris Pasternak

three on Tsvetaeva; the next chapter is similar, but starts with Tsvetaeva. With this sort of rapid shift it is difficult to evoke any one poet with the inwardness that might be possible in a more continuous narrative. In the later chapters of the book, it is fair to say, there is a greater degree of concentration, particularly on Mandelstam and Tsvetaeva.

The poetry too suffers from this kaleidoscopic approach. A great deal of verse is quoted here, all of it specially translated by the author in a distinctive jagged style, sometimes quite successfully, sometimes (inevitably) less so. Poems and (more usually) extracts follow one another in quick succession, and most of Hingley's comments concern their message or themes, rather than their specific quality as poems. This is not so true of the first prolonged discussion of each poet (for instance the sympathetic pages on Pasternak's early verse in Chapter Three), and later in the book there are good brief accounts of Tsvetaeva's *After Russia* and Mandelstam's poems of the 1930s. On the whole though, as the book proceeds, the poems are increasingly treated as material for a biography, as the verse statement of individuals in particular circumstances.

In some critical biographies of poets the life story gives new meaning to the poetry - one thinks for instance of the illuminating treatment of the "Ode to the West Wind" in Richard Holmes's biography of Shelley. Here it is rather the other way round, the life clearly dominates the poems, and perhaps that is unavoidable in dealing with foreign poets.

Even so, I hope that this readable narrative will inspire readers to go further on their own in the discovery of the actual work which makes Akhmatova, Pasternak, Mandelstam and Tsvetaeva so important.



Anna Akhmatova

Silhouettes by E. Kruglikova, Moscow, 1922.

Reporting on the flood

By Bernard Bergonzi

SHEILA GRANT DUFF:

The Parting of Ways
A Personal Account of the Thirties
223pp. Peter Owen. £10.50.
0 7206 0586 5

Interest in the 1930s continues unabated, whether in the re-running of myths and familiar images or the arguments provoked by revisionist historians. Sheila Grant Duff provides the simple authenticity of a personal account by someone who was for a few years a close observer of the dramas of the age. She is a product of that network of famous and influential families whose interconnections and intermarriages formed the governing classes of Victorian and Edwardian England. Her paternal and maternal grandfathers were close friends, both Liberal MPs. The former, Sir Mount Stuart Grant Duff, was the lesser figure, whose principal achievement was to become Governor of Madras. The latter was a more conspicuously eminent Victorian: Sir John Lubbock, the first Lord Avebury, a politician who was responsible for the Bank Holiday Act of 1871 which gave working men the statutory right to a holiday; he was also a scientist and a friend of Huxley and Darwin. Sheila Grant Duff is descended from his second marriage to the daughter of General Lane Fox Pitt Rivers, archaeologist and anthropologist. She herself was born in 1913, when the network was on the eve of dissolution: her father, a regular army officer, was killed in action soon after the outbreak of the First World War, and two of her uncles were killed later. It is a commonplace that the 1930s generation was deeply affected by the war that they had been too young to fight in; Sheila Grant Duff, who was too young even to remember her father, grew up determined to do all she could to prevent another war.

She had a happy childhood, particularly when the family were at High

Elms, their rambling country house in Kent, adjoining Darwin's estate near Farnborough; there were holidays in Scotland and, later, with friends in North Cornwall and the Isle of Wight. Sheila Grant Duff writes of her early years with measured nostalgia, sketching in a conventionally idyllic life divided, in the upper-class way, between eury and grown-up world, of a kind familiar from many English autobiographies and novels. In due course she was presented at Court. But unlike many other girls from similar backgrounds she had inherited a large measure of social idealism from her family, and she was also clever enough to go to Oxford. She went up in 1931 to read PPE and entered a circle of subsequently distinguished acquaintances, some of whom were still alive, and all of whom helped to mould what is recognizably our world, as opposed to the world in which Sheila Grant Duff had been born. She had tutorials in philosophy with R. G. Collingwood, formed an acquaintanceship with Richard Crossman, friendships with Douglas Jay and Isaiah Berlin, and something more than friendship with Goronwy Rees, a dazzlingly brilliant scholarship boy and enfant terrible from a Cardiff grammar school who was elected to All Souls at the same time as the Old Etonian Quintin Hogg. Sheila Grant Duff was on the edge of the self-mythologizing circles of the 1930s (that are now, retrospectively, so familiar, but there was not much of a place for women in them, and her particular combination of idealism and independent-mindedness took her in a different direction).

Under the pressures of the age her inherited idealism took a leftward turn; she briefly visited Russia, but seems not to have been seriously tempted by Communism, and she was repelled by Goronwy Rees's friend Guy Burgess. Alarmed, like many of her contemporaries, at the rise of Hitler, she determined to become a journalist and tell the truth to English readers about foreign affairs, in the hope of avoiding the disaster of another war. She was young and naive, but she was also

intelligent, determined and energetic, with enough useful connections to give her a foothold in journalism. She was helped by having a small private income, so that she could serve an apprenticeship by acting as unpaid helper to established foreign correspondents, something which could not happen in the highly unionized profession of today. Her principal mentor was a well-known American journalist, Edgar Ansel Mowrer, who had sent dramatic reports about the early days of Nazism in Berlin before he was forced to leave. He transferred his base to Paris, where as correspondent of the *Chicago Daily News* he found work for Sheila and gave her a thorough political education in the state of Europe. He is one of the dominant figures in an amiable hero-worshiping book. Others include Goronwy Rees, with whom Sheila was in love for a while (she does not, however, mention her in his own autobiography); Adam von Trott, a young German aristocrat whom she met when he was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, and who was executed in 1944 for his part in the generals' plot against Hitler; and the Czech journalist and democratic politician, Hubert Ripka.

In becoming a foreign correspondent, she had broken with the normal expectations about a girl of her class and background, however bright. At the same time she had assumed one of the archetypal roles of the age. The newspaper was still the supreme news medium and the reporter was a modern culture hero, attractively presented in popular fiction and films; foreign correspondents were particularly glamorous figures. And journalism was open to women. The enterprising, wise-cracking, tough but good-hearted girl reporter became a familiar Hollywood type. One of Sheila Grant Duff's first assignments was to report for the *Observer* the Starline plebiscite of 1935, where she encountered triumphant Nazism at close quarters. Back in England she worked for a while as personal assistant to Jawahar Nehru when he was in London, then returned to journalism on the Continent. In 1936 she decided

to base herself in Prague, where there were no resident Western correspondents, and which she rightly saw as a likely centre of international crisis. However, she took time off from there to carry out a secret mission for Mowrer, by making a brief and potentially dangerous visit to Malaga in Nationalist Spain to get news of the imprisoned Arthur Koestler. She became very attached to Czechoslovakia. Like an earlier British visitor, Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart, she saw the between-wars republic as a haven of democracy and civilization and she reported German threats to its integrity and independence with growing urgency. But the *Observer* under Garvin was committed to appeasing Hitler and her relations with the paper grew difficult, not least because of the suspicion directed at her in Prague as its correspondent, and finally she resigned. She continued working in Czechoslovakia as a freelance whilst trying to arouse public opinion in England about its fate.

Her book is a vivid though not very profound recreation of far-off people and events, by one who early in life was briefly immersed in what Auden called "the dangerous flood of history". It is a memoir of activities rather than an autobiography which is strongly revealing of its subject's personal attitudes and emotions. Sheila Grant Duff conveys her feeling about Czechoslovakia, certainly; but there are other interesting things about which she says very little, such as her dealings with her family and friends over her individualistic course of life. She says just enough about her relationship with Adam von Trott to make one wish for more; he was in love with her, and she was unable to reciprocate the feeling, though she was very fond of him despite political disagreements. He emerges from her book as a tragically tormented figure, anti-Nazi but patriotically German and hurt by her hostility, as he saw it, to his country; and devoted, to a few more years, to his martyr's death. Her accounts of his touch on feelings that are not apparent elsewhere, but she has pretent not to get out of her depth, and one cannot blame her for that.

Her extensive network of family connections was useful in this process. Being related to Winston Churchill's wife, she got to know him about the Czech situation. Churchill invited the young journalist to lunch and subsequently kept in close touch with her about the Nazi threat to Czechoslovakia. In September 1938 the Czechs were betrayed by the West at the Munich agreement; whatever historians may say about it now, Sheila Grant Duff's account records the intense anguish of a first-hand participant in the crisis and a passionate supporter of the Czech cause. From having been an opponent of war in the early 1930s she had come, like her friend Ripka, to want the strong Czech army to make a stand against the Nazis; it was widely believed that the German generals would remove Hitler rather than fight a war that time, there was general satisfaction with the supposed settlement, though it was lost last year. As Louis McNeice wrote:

Glory to God for Munich. And stocks go up and wrecks

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Blinding the bourgeois

By George Gömöri

TAMAS ACZEL:
Illuminations
375pp. Faber. £7.95.
0 571 11827 5

Tamas Aczel has spent the larger part of his life (thirty-five years in all) in his native Hungary; he published his first book of poetry in Hungary during the Second World War. After it he was both a believing and a pre-emptive communist for many years, writing books slanted in a way that earned him praise from the highest authorities - in 1952 he was awarded the Stalin Prize. It was his rebellion against the Party line and rejection of its double standards that earned him the title of genuine writer in the mid 1950s. An émigré since 1956, Aczel first lived in London, leaving for the United States (where he teaches at the University of Massachusetts) in 1966. *Illuminations* is his first novel written in English.

Given this background, *Illuminations* seems a surprisingly bourgeois novel. Its hero, George Feldheimer, comes from a good Hungarian middle-class family: his father is an internationally known Jewish pediatrician decorated in the First World War, his mother an anxiety-ridden and religious Catholic. Feldheimer himself, a refugee dentist-stomatologist, leads a fairly typical cosmopolitan middle-class existence in Hampstead. His reminiscences often evoke the committed interlude when Feldheimer

was still considered a good Party member, was sent to China and other places on official visits and had to worry about the ideological purity of his statements or relationships, but all that belongs firmly to the past. Feldheimer's irony may be laced from time to time with references to "Uncle Karl" and "Josif Vissarionovich" but it is clear that he has lost whatever interest he may have had in politics. The recent past has receded beyond the horizon; not so the more distant past, or the familiar spirits of Father and Mother. Feldheimer's happy immersion in the nostalgic, lukewarm bathwater of bourgeois Vienna in the 1960s shows that in fact that is the milieu he likes best.

In fact, Feldheimer is in some ways more *Akteur* than Hungarian. The edges of his Hungarian are sufficiently blurred to reassure the reader with no interest in local issues, but they are still audible to those able to grasp his frequent, and for the English ear slightly exotic, allusions. Aczel's cultural package includes information on Franz Joseph's sexual habits as well as glitz references to Danie (though not to the Austro-Hungarian secret police) which exists only in the blurbwriter's imagination. Kretschmer as well as the forgotten terrorist Sylvester Matuskas of Blatobag, General Zhukov's tanks as well as *Grenadiermarsch* (an improvised dish, not a military march). This in itself would not matter; *Darkness at Noon* takes place in Russia, and more than one of Graham Greene's novels in the Caribbean, yet they are easily understandable to most English readers. The problem, rather, is that Aczel builds

up his main character in such a way that his past appears to be infinitely richer and more exciting than his present or, as we may conclude when we finish the novel, his future ever will be. Yet *Illuminations* is definitely not a political novel.

Is it, then, a novel of adventure, perhaps? It certainly pretends to be that, without any real success. The main plot - George Feldheimer losing his eyesight in a traffic accident in Hampstead and regaining it for a short time only to lose it again, which is in a sense Feldheimer chasing his eyesight and his happiness - is slow to gather momentum, and once the author has made his protagonist blind, he is not quite sure what to do with him next. He transports him to Vienna in anticipation of a near-miraculous operation by a famous eye-specialist only to destroy this hope one chapter later. The specialist, Dr. Abelim, is murdered in mysterious circumstances. Why? By whom? We are never to know. Another shallow mystery is Livia's disappearance. She is Feldheimer's much-suffering, plump lady friend who seems to play a fairly important part in the plot until she suddenly slips away, "never to come back again". And is there any point in inserting between two sessions of Viennese coffee-drinking and brioche-eating the truly horrifying story of Ravallac's torture and slow execution, which took place in 1610? I suspect that Aczel did not quite know how to handle his own material.

If the story lacks coherence, the style at times strikes one as a curious mixture of Central European cultural cliché and a far too idiosyncratic English vocabulary. When the author refers for the fifth time to his (thirty-nine-year-old) hero's "young, weebone heart" it is enough to make one squirm. In fact *Illuminations* is most readable in those parts where a novella is inserted into the uneven flow of the narrative - these stories have a stabilizing, soothing effect on the mind even when they relate events at such grim places as Mauthausen or Zhigansk in Siberia. Perhaps Aczel's talents are more suited to short, conventional stories than to the longish and complex novel which pretends to use all the up-to-date techniques of contemporary fiction.

Paranoid puzzles

By William Logan

BOB SHAW:
A Batter Mantrap
192pp. Gollancz. £6.95.
0 575 03083 6

At his best, Bob Shaw subverts the conventions of science fiction by plotting from other genres. In "Frost Animals", the most satisfying story of his new collection, a murder case is reopened eighteen years after the murder, when the only suspect returns from outer space. His accuser is dead, the corpse has never been found, witnesses have forgotten details but the memory is fresh for the suspect, who owing to the effects of relativity is only thirteen months older than when he left.

The same shrewdness about conventions invigorates the ghost story in "The Cottage of Eternity", where a mad scientist's speculations about ghosts and particle physics lead him to murder. In these stories Shaw understands the essential absurdity of science fiction - how its apparently limitless possibilities have been slavishly restricted by adolescent fantasies of power and personal triumph. Shaw's solution has been to exploit the restraints of his form.

That such a course is not always successful is shown by the stories here that are flawed by elementary transgressions of narrative. A horror story, "Conversion", about an alien creature emerging from a teleport device, fails to develop the crucial link between the working-class hero and his lover, an engineer. Seeking to startle by beginning with their death, it cannot establish the emotional necessary for the story's real horror - her return from the dead. Similarly, a *dear ex-machina*, though a very strange one, spoils "Amphitheatre".

A *Batter Mantrap* is Shaw's eighth book of science fiction, and his third collection of stories. Though he has written a number of interesting novels, including *Night Walk* and *Orbville*, and a best-selling one, *Outer Days*, *Other* is a novel in the recent work best described as a stylistic exercise. Only

rarely does he provide, for example, the incidental graces, the small marks of future shock, that are one of the principal delights of the genre - as when one of his characters, too tired to walk a few flights of stairs, pays the elevator surcharge instead.

When Shaw's stories rely on contrivance rather than exploiting it, they go to neither the possibilities of one genre nor the rules of another. "Dream Fight", for instance, cannot revive a predictable tale about a has-been fighter and his young rival merely by making them telepathic who contend via projected images. After the first page of "In the Hereafter Hilton", in which society has outfitted its execution chambers as hotel rooms, only the most inattentive reader will have failed to guess the conclusion. When he is not toying with other genres, Shaw can be sentimental and corny, as in two stories here about insufferable little boys in space colonies.

And even science fiction cannot survive stilted sentences or clumsy dialogue ("It was true, all right," Barney said. "The little swine gave me a lethal dose of something. I don't care about that, though - it didn't stop me coming back for you").

Science fiction is still, primarily, a paranoid form of writing, with the paranoia rudely deflected by triumphant endings. Its strength is drained not just by convention, but by the effort to outwit the reader, mentally without testing him emotionally. At its worst, it is an involving as crossword puzzle. Writers like Shaw, who consciously reject the attempts of new-wave writers to find innovative forms to match an alien content, must provide more than the old formulas - if science-fiction stories, that is, are not to be nasty, brutish, and short.

Genre feeding on genre is an amusement, not an advance. Though none of these new stories matches the nerve of his science-fiction western ("Skinsuit on a Summer Morning") or his detective tale about a "private pal" ("The Glacinda Caplan"), he would enjoy future raids by on-myth, hard-boiled, however, he is caught in a played-out style, and seems unwilling to risk a new one.

Tropic of tongues

By James Kirkup

JEAN METELLUS:
Jocmel au crépuscule
254pp. Paris: Gollinsrd. Fr 37.50.

With a few notable exceptions, the best African and Caribbean literature now seems to be written not in English, but in French, and to a lesser extent, in Spanish and Portuguese. Francophone and Lusophone novelists and poets of Africa and the Caribbean can be said to form a school of original and professional writers the like of which cannot be found among those whose language is English. Francophone poets and novelists in particular display an originality and sensitivity that spring from the language itself, which they often manipulate in subtle new ways to create what is virtually experimental French, successfully combining classical rigour and the exotic exuberance of native vocabulary, idioms and proverbs.

Jean Metellus, a practising neurologist, is one of these authors. It was as a highly articulate and hallucinating poet that he began his writing career a few years ago with *Au Pli-rite chantant*, an admirable first collection whose eclectic themes and unique, organic French style, both playful and passionate, seemed to put him far above the present rather drab native French word-spinners.

Jocmel au crépuscule is Metellus's first novel. Jocmel is the name of the town in Haiti where the author was born, and like many first novels it is largely autobiographical. It exhibits all the rapturous and generous style of his poetry in a dazzling Haitian variety of Rabelaisian French. The prose rushes along with a tropical abundance of violent, startling imagery and gorgeous vocabulary, as the language enthusiastically incorporates native words and speech rhythms. The effect is rather like a Douanier Rousseau painting come to disturbing life.

There is a large and sometimes bewildering cast of eccentric and memorable characters, including two pairs of twins - the influence of Michel Tournier's *Les Météores*, first

published in 1975, has perhaps made itself felt here. The dialogues are voluble, funny and fantastic, with their own peculiar brand of logical illogicality. The two chief characters are the ever-youthful, ever-questioning Candide-like hero, Piquette, and his delightful former mistress, Gnos Nina. The events take place in 1956, and so the novel can almost be regarded as a historical tale or burlesque, lyric chronicle of life in Haiti, America. It is also an acute study of the moral, social and economic situation that has gone on deteriorating through bloody tragedy, decadent authority and political corruption, to the wretched present-day state of this beautiful island and its even more attractive inhabitants. The old colonial influences are still remembered with bitterness and a keen satirical eye.

Haitians, with their resilient gaiety and vigorous individuality, have always shown great courage, adaptability and resourcefulness in the face of adversity, and never more so than today, in their country's desperate and tragic confusion. Throughout this illuminating novel, we see people struggling to remain faithful to their roots, to their ancient voodoo gods, and to that extraordinary Haitian tongue which in itself seems to give them all the gift of tongues, and richness of humour, passion and poetry inform their attempts. The novel ripples along from one tragicomic scene to another, and the author's irrepressible native spirit ensures that, unlike many modern British picaresque novels, it does not run out of steam halfway through: we are held to the very end by the extraordinary character and their brilliant, never-failing gift of the gab.

First published in 1934, *L'Africain* Pontôme by Michel Leiris has recently been reissued (Editions Gallimard, 536pp). It is the journal written by M. Leiris during a voyage through Africa in 1930 which he joined at the invitation of the ethnographer Marcel Griaule; the publishers comment that "le carnet de Michel Leiris glisse vers 'Le Journal intime' comme s'il était le diu de soi-même, et se lit sur ce qu'il est lui-même, l'observateur fausse le jeu".

Notes for a broken consort

By Galen Strawson

JACQUELINE SIMMS:
Unsolicted Gift
151pp. Chatto and Windus. £6.95.
0 7011 2616 7

Michael married his sister Fleur, reading out the right bits from the Book of Common Prayer. She was eight and he was eleven, and the consummation of the marriage, in their grandfather's dusty laboratory, was a most serious make-believe solemn and fully clothed. The idea was Fleur's. How were they to keep all their grandparents' possessions in the family? What better way than for them to marry and make a mutual will, each leaving to the other the things the other most wanted?

When Michael was fifteen and Fleur was twelve, she said it was time that they "took the next step". She undressed, and smiled, and Michael "lay heavily on her; and Fleur, who had always been brave as a little girl, cried". Later that year Michael set up an experiment in the laboratory, working from his grandfather's notebooks, and Fleur, entering unexpectedly as he retired to wash, was killed in the explosion. Michael proceeded to a double and successful career in science and music.

At thirty he had a daughter, Sumi.

by his Japanese wife Kikuyo, whom in the crisis of their courtship he could not distinguish from Fleur. "I am not Fleur", said Kikuyo inoue throughout that night.

But Fleur was not forgotten. Sumi's birth seemed to Michael "a resurrection from the dead". In early adolescence Sumi found Fleur's memoirs. And when Michael was forty-five, and Sumi in turn was fifteen, she undressed and stood before him, and they went together to her room. These are the mathematics of Michael's fate; and Michael is not entirely likeable; but Jacqueline Simms's book has a happy ending, when he turns fifty in the spring of 1985.

Unsolicted Gift is a remarkable, finely cadenced first novel. The main body of it is written - not just narrated - by Michael himself; and his authorial musings on what he writes are among Simms's few errors of judgment. But interpolated into his text are "The Memoirs of Miss Fleur . . . by Herself, in her Thirtieth Year"; a children's story by Kikuyo, "Scenes of Childhood", which follows Schumann's *Kinder-scenen* in its titled sections as it tilts into the surreal; "Notes from Sumi"; and "A Broken Consort", in which Michael and Kikuyo, suffering the "slow elapse" of their marriage, speak in turn like the characters in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*. (A whole consort, in old musical terminology, is one in which all the instruments are of the same kind, strung or wind; a broken consort is one in which this is not so.)

It is not only in her structural devices that Jacqueline Simms reveals her musicality. Some of Sumi's "Notes" - fragments of diaries, letters not for sending, written to her Papa - are notes about notes: "The best way for me to represent my past year to you would be simply to play a scale: Dum-de-de De-de-de Dum." Fleur was destined to be a musician; Michael, for all his "desperately well-intentioned passivity", is as successful as a player of the cello and viola da gamba as he is as a scientist (in which latter capacity he contributes like his grandfather to mankind's instruments of destruction); Kikuyo is a violinist, but becomes a highly successful writer for children; Sumi, a pianist like Fleur, wins a Premier Prix at the Paris Conservatoire; and the novel ends during her accomplished debut in the Salle Gaveau.

So much success - with so little sense of struggle; mere talent, proceeding to its rewards. It is partly by their easy devotion to fruitful vocations that Michael and Kikuyo are distanced from each other, and from us. But this is not the only source of distance; there is something cold in their devotedly inward, dispassionate, stylish self-analysis. Kikuyo, consulting the dictionary, judges Michael to be sweet in the finest senses of the word, and we

must believe her; but there is something unattractively inert in his careful hedonism, his deep, detached, defensive egotism. The two of them are married, for all their *finesse*. It is Sumi who promises the human success.

Unsolicted Gift seems slightly too long, although it is short. But it is an admirable, delicate work. Michael's tale suffers occasionally from factual

Partisan Review (1982 - Volume XLIX Number 1: 158pp) contains fiction by Joyce Carol Oates ("Our Walls") and two stories by Arno Schmidt, "Tall Grete" ("Die Lange Grete") and "Gretchen" ("Grosser Gai"). Translated by John Woods. There is also an article on "Arno Schmidt: 1914-1979" by Friedrich P. Ott; other articles include one on contemporary Hebrew literature, by Amos Oz; "Talking with Jose

Donoso", by Ronald Christ; "The Right to Read", by Igor Pomerantz; "Jean Rhys", by Linda Bamber; "Freud's Case Studies", by Carl Pletsch; and an interview conducted with Jan Kavan on dissidence in Czechoslovakia. Also published are reviews of Aharon Appelfeld's *Badenheim 1939*, D. M. Thomas's *The White Hotel*, Samuel Beckett's *Company* and William S. Burroughs's *Cities of the Red Night*.

Heights of fancy

By Michael Hofmann

LYNNE SHARON SCHWARTZ:
Balancing Acts
155pp. Gollancz. £7.95.
0 575 03086 0

Lynne Sharon Schwartz's second novel strikes one as being something of a balancing act itself, so fraught is it with perils and improbabilities. One is even tempted to identify the tiny figure on the cover with the author - wandering along a high-wire over the twin abysses of pulp fiction and schmalzy children's literature, passing and re-passing the colossal age-gap of sixty years between her two main characters. It is as though Ms Schwartz had written this novel in response to a dare, the necessity for a confident and believable performance from her is so strong.

Balancing Acts describes, in alternate chapters, the separate but meshing lives of these two main figures over a period of about a year. At seventy-four, Max Fried is a widower and former circus acrobat, a crusty and difficult old man who drinks, smokes cigars before breakfast, and is clearly intent on going into that last goodnight with a maximum of clatter. His opposite number, the female lead, is Alison Markman, a thirteen-year-old schoolgirl, whose puberty, like Max's high old age, is a dramatic period of transition. Astonishingly, given her boring upbringing in Westchester, in the heart of American suburbia, she declares herself to be "verbally precocious", and is a closet, or rather, a mattress novelist, working on the picaresque adventures of Alice, a kind of alter ego. A thoroughgoing non-conformist, like Max, Alison will have nothing to do with the dull opiate of boys, and instead concentrates on her longing for freedom and her developing sense of herself.

The book opens with the two of them in their respective institutions: Max is at Pleasure Knolls (sic) after suffering a heart-attack who he is mugged in New York; Alison is at school. It is their obscurity that brings them together when Max takes on some circus-related gymnastics in which the girl sees the promise of a wider, anaristic freedom. Rather pleasingly, however, they are not to be involved in any

intense and mutually productive interaction. Instead, Max resents the attentions of his young friend; her questions about his past, her boasts of juggling with three oranges, her late-night phone-calls. Their relationship consists, rather, in the silent and unapprehended parallelism of their developments. Avoiding the problematic extremes of gerontophilia and didacticism, Schwartz concentrates with considerable sensitivity on their solipsistic attempts at escapism: Max lives in the past, his hand-mouth existence at the circus, his ecstatic marriage to a trapeze artist, the death of his wife from leukaemia. There is even a touch of remoteness and complacency in his description of him: "Max frowned into the phone. It was midnight. It had been a long, cold day, and he was in bed, yearning to curl into oblivion with Hercule Poirot." Alison, too, has her dreams and her contentments, many of which find their way into her terrific little novel:

"The truth is less glamorous. Alison is apprehended in Pony Station, making a break for it after being turned down by the circus. It is understood that she will settle back into family life with her incompensible parents and a new little brother. Max dies after a further heart-attack while dreaming of making love to his dead wife, his death indirectly occasioned by Alison's flight. Before this, however, he manages a last fling with his next-door neighbour, a former chorus girl; an immensely popular sexual act, in which he will no doubt receive the silent encouragement of everyone who reads this book.

This type of reaction is the key to the novel's limitations. There is no evil in *Balancing Acts*, and even death, as we have seen, has no dominion. The absorption of Max and Alison into the waiting communities of the dead and the adult is perhaps a little too lovable, landing an air of blandness to what is in all other respects a sympathetic and polished book.

In lost man's country

By Christopher Hope

RANDOLPH STOW:
To the Islands
126pp. Secker and Warburg. £6.95.
0 436 49732 8

It is now almost a quarter of a century since the young Randolph Stow (just twenty-two at the time) published his remarkable novel of Stephen Heriot's penitential passage through the Australian wilderness. The old patriarch's spiritual adventures had as their background what the author described, in a note to the 1958 edition of *To the Islands*, as an "isolated, but fairly progressive mission" of the type he saw to be in danger of disappearing. Stow's aim at the time was to provide some idea of the "positive contribution" the Anglican missions were making to "native welfare".

Such mission stations in the remote northern reaches of Australia and the Aboriginal communities they once supported have now gone, and no one would talk of making contributions to native welfare without first indemnifying themselves with an ironic smile. Accordingly, Stow has re-examined his position, and in the preface to this revised version of the novel he briskly confesses that the original book was quite deliberately "masking propaganda on behalf of the Christian mission-stations for Aborigines", a crusade which he admits failed long ago. Yet something of the old crusading zeal clearly lingers, and the new preface notes the "bright light" in the condemnation of the decision to close the mission sta-

tions. The predictable results of the resettlement of the mission-dependent Aborigines near hostile white towns. Stow records with commendable perfunctoriness, have been "drink, prostitution, violence and go!" Recent attempts to reverse the process and return to the mission territories have not been particularly successful, with relations between black and white deteriorating sharply, and Stow roundly condemns the Anglican church for its lack of vision in jettisoning its cargo of dependants.

The extinction of his hopes for the mission stations have led Stow to make a number of small but significant revisions. Cut to the bone in the new edition is the love-affair readers of the original will remember unfolding between the nurse Helen Bond and the good-hearted Terry Dixon (with a faint challenge from the idealistic Bob Gunn). Gone too are those conversations in which Stow had his characters support the role of the mission stations or put the opposing view that the station inevitably became a "sort of native town" and that its inhabitants, sadly, felt encouraged to be "cheeky" towards their white betters. Also edited is his account of the dilemma of the Church, characteristically engaged in trying to square the circle, looking increasingly to the resettlement of its Aboriginal charges in or near the white towns as a proper liberal response and a rather useful solution to the practical problem of getting them to work for a living instead of "sponging" on the missions, as the "progressive" priest, Father Way, was made to express it in the original.

It must be said that Stow's revisions everywhere strengthen the

TIM HEALD:
Masterstroke
166pp. Hutchinson. £6.95.
0 09 146760 8

Simon Bognor, Tim Heald's bungling Board of Trade Inspector, is sent down to Oxford to investigate the murder of the Master of his former College. Half-pickled as usual, Bognor picks a clumsy path between amoral businessmen, homosexual school-teachers and Oxford's answer to the Cambridge Burgess, Maclean and Philby set. Amusing and effective, with some neat touches - a number of in-jokes. Perhaps a trifle sentimental about Oxford, and more than a trifle out-of-date about its traffic systems, no motor-bicycle, not even one ridden by a beautiful English den in designer jeans and thigh-high leather boots, can speed unimpeded down the Cornmarket.

SIMON BRETT:
Murder Unpromised
160pp. Gollancz. £5.95.
0 575 03070 4

Charles Paris, Simon Brett's aging, dissolute actor, at last gets to play the lead - but only after the previous leading man has been shot. Given Paris's luck, the play is bound to fold soon, but he just has time to solve the crime before the inevitable occurs. As usual, good and amusing back-stage material, joined to a fast and unobtrusive plot. But can Paris really be thinking of going back to his wife?

T. J. Blaydon

MARTIN RUSSELL:
Ratcatcher
191pp. Collins. £6.50.
0 00 231721 4

Journalist Mike Willoughby suspects skulduggery when the Minister of Defence kills himself by driving his car off the road. And he couldn't be more right. Martin Russell's book is a variation on the classic formula in which the hero discovers a truth so staggeringly unlikely that all the people he tries to confide in assume he is nuttier than a fruit cake and issue an urgent call for the men to white coats. It has plenty of energy and a good narrative flow, although it perhaps rather goes over the top, credibility-wise, in the last few episodes.

LAWRENCE BLOCK:
The Burglar Who Liked To Quote Kipling
196pp. Robert Hale. £6.50.
0 7091 8746 7

Former burglar Bernie Rhodenbarr now runs a second-hand bookshop on East 11th Street between Broadway and University Place. To oblige a client with a yen for a rare edition of Kipling, he foolishly comes out of retirement to find himself caught up in an affair of more than oriental complexity. Bernie is a nice guy to have around: his narration is as fluent as his lock-picking, and his wit is as New York. An amusing, well-put-together story, based on a usual idea.

Criminal proceedings

JOHN BUXTON HILTON:
The Green Frontier
169pp. Collins. £6.50.
0 00 231029 5

Superintendent Kenworthy, John Buxton Hilton's usual cop, retired a book or two ago, but he is now called back into action by his colleagues. A German clergyman is murdered in a wood in the Chilterns, and the crime appears to have some connection with Kenworthy's experiences as an Intelligence Corps sergeant in occupied Berlin. John Buxton Hilton is here attempting something rather deeper and more serious than his earlier Kenworthy books. On the whole he brings it off - the flashbacks to the British Zone in 1945 are extremely good - but at the expense of pace and narrative simplicity. It was perhaps a subject which should have been treated with greater length. But the book is still very much to be recommended.

W. J. BURLLEY:
Wycliffe's Wild-Goose Chase
176pp. Gollancz. £5.95.
0 575 03077 1

Detective Chief Superintendent Wycliffe, W. J. Burlley's Cornish policeman, walking on the beach one home one fine Sunday morning, discovers a loaded revolver with one chamber recently fired to the shingle. Investigation takes him gradually into a very peculiar case. Not much action here, but a very strong, brooding atmosphere and a number of equally strong, brooding characters.

Wingatui

Sit in the car with the headlights off.
Look out there now
where the yellow moon floats like across the birdcage.
You might have touched that sky you lost.
You might have split that azure violin in two.

Bill Manhire

THE WHITE HOTEL
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KING PENGUIN

Between matter and spirit

By Roger Garfitt

PETER REDGROVE:
The Apple-Broadcast
and other new poems
133pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.
£3 (cassette, £5.15).
0 7100 0884 8
0 7100 0985 2 (cassette)

If Peter Redgrove were not a visionary poet, if it were not part of his work's ambition to be self-effacing, it would be possible to admire him as a stylist. As it is, there is scarcely time. It is not just that the surfaces of his language are as transparent as the surfaces of his world, continually opening into other realms: more than this, his language is kinetic, and the effect is consumed in creating the next.

For example, this moment from "Le Cabaret Blanc" is just nine from a long sequence of images:

Now, outside, gazing through the quick-
set stars
Thorn-hunched in the smokeless air
Is like looking through God's watch,
Through all the wheels with diamond
teeth;

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1861-1919 CEREB HX

Many poets would be happy to end with lines as good as "the quickest stars" Thorn-hunched in the smokeless air". Here it seems inappropriate even to stop and savour them. Redgrove has already swept us on to the image of God's watch, for which he has prepared us earlier in the poem, so that it comes more naturally than the excerpt may suggest. And yet that glimpse of the stars is crucial to the imagination's ascent (and ascent) to the idea of God's watch. The image's power, in other words, is fully evoked only to be immediately expended in driving the poem forward.

This happens time and again in Redgrove. We tend to think of imagery and rhetoric as opposing poetic strategies, and to regard one as sincere and the other as suspect. In Redgrove that opposition vanishes. He invades us step by step, image by image, each so instantly persuasive that it amounts to a small rhetorical coup, towards a vision of the universe that we would never have accepted at the outset.

Such coups are successful only because Redgrove is a poet of great linguistic resources. Where many poets cultivate one particular area of the language, he has a Shakespearean breadth of vocabulary, drawing on Anglo-Saxon roots for his thorn-hunched stars and on Latin roots for his description of a river, "Like one long unbroken room of sequent chambers / Sliding through each other". That is a phrase of Shakespearean grandeur, and yet the eloquence, like Shakespeare's, is almost incidental. What matters is the thought, the continuing discrimination and redefinition that in the next phrase places those "sequent chambers" / Sliding through each other" as "pulses" Echoed from the rainy source".

Redgrove's early training as a scientific journalist, clearly still of value to him, is capped by his gift for humorous invention, beautifully in evidence in the opening lines of "At the Street Party":

Water makes her way, accustomed
Into all places, through mire as an 'eel,
Through the air as a hawk,
She gets past the obliterators of forms
Because she is the transformer,
Gets past clothed in food-chains,
Buckled into such supple, stretchy
Revelation luggage as you.

As wasps and gnats, such expanding
Revelation luggage as you.
The range of those lines, from balled language to the language of the biochemist, is extraordinary; but their charm goes beyond command of varying idioms. There is a relaxed, improvisatory quality about the de-ironing of language, the "expanding luggage as you". This willingness to be *homo ludens* in order to become *homo sapiens* is central to Redgrove's method. He follows an idea to see where it will go, and his exposition becomes a shared adventure.

But exposition, even of this quality, can take one only so far. It is by transposition that Redgrove achieves his most important effects. His habit of reworking material allows us to watch this process in action. An image will appear in one poem in its original, anecdotal form - fresh from the notebook - while in another poem, it will appear transposed into quite another, imaginative, order. Thus the title poem, which is printed last in the book, includes the phrase "the stiff dry arrow, grass". In "Le Cabaret Blanc", printed earlier in the book, that simple observation has become "There are toms / Pierced with long grass as though their doors / Were not through with radiant flights of arrows". One mode seems to underwrite the other, the precision of the observation carrying over into the clarity and certainty of the vision.

A similar transposition occurs in Redgrove's use of his key words, "ghost" and "spirit". Often, as in "Le Cabaret Blanc", one section of the sequence is called "Wei Angel", "ghost" is almost a scientific term, Redgrove's word for the outcome of

a process, every stage of which we can follow:

The fountain's rigid path.
An iron motor hammers in an oily box.
Water sledge-hammered through stiff pipes.
Water shocked into ghosts through an iron lit
In a concrete basin, like a wine of light.

Electric-powered: its ghost-heart
In the generating-stations
Is a fountain of current a county away.
Ghost driving ghost through the wires
like cool pipes.

And behind this blue ghost a black one
Black with millennia of sunlight which it
gives up
Moving and yetling in the power-house
fines.

"Streets of the Spirits" starts at that level, with an evocation of the wind in the trees: "air-horses that bound / From tree-crowned hill to copse, / Printing footmarks that heal again". At the end of the poem the subject is still the wind in the trees - but the wind as revealed in its sacred aspect:

I think of the air like an immense cope
Of silky glass stirred by the valiant
trees,
Like welded ghost, or a bell ringing
That rumbles and unrumbles with its
notes.

The spirits the music of the trees
Dealing like the clappers of a world-
bell,
By a command of their deeply-interlinked
noia
With their chases beating world-music
into everything.

"Cope" signals a heightening of implication, so that by the time we come to "ghost", the word has a dual resonance. On one level, it is still the outcome of a process, "welded" by the wind's movement, on the other level, it is revealed as a sacramental presence, "the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace". The two levels fuse in the image of "world-music", in which process becomes celebration.

It is in this fusion of the scientific and the religious that Redgrove's poetry has most to offer; but it is this very fusion that is likely to pose most problems for his readers. How complete can the fusion be? How equal a relationship does Redgrove allow between the two modes of thought? Or is he using scientific evidence to put over what is at heart a religious belief? Or is he using religious language, with all its richness of association, to give an extra resonance to what is strictly a scientific account?

Redgrove himself would probably not even accept the distinction on which these questions are based. As he said in an interview given to the *Hudson Review* in 1976,

The visions are visions of matter. I'm a materialist, you see, but I'm a materialist in the Hindu tradition, which regards matter as a song. This is not so far from contemporary physics, of course. What we're made of is a complex vibration... The shaman is not a man who doubts (this is a mistake made in later Greek thought); he is a man who separates his mind from his body and goes into the universe and flies away like an

angel, as Blake knew very well... He's a man that goes into the universe of his body, and in the universe of the body all the forces that make us are compiled. That is, we are a focus of many many forces in the world.

That seems sensible enough. To say that "matter sings" is to hold both sides in balance. But the word "shaman" alerts us to another difficulty.

As I have argued elsewhere, there is a sense in which all poetry is a recovery of the ancient magical view of the universe. Set against twentieth-century alienation, such a recovery becomes particularly poignant. Who would not be humbled by contact with an ancient people who live, as Tom Lowenstein has written of the Alaskan Eskimos, "in a full universe, whose precise components - physical, spiritual and historical - must all be in the power of active human contact and recall", for whom the act of song-making is "a process by which the mind tunes itself in to an articulate universe"? The influence of shaman song on such poets as Ted Hughes and Peter Redgrove is obviously crucial to the making of our poetry. But that influence should result in an ancient vision finding new expression in contemporary form, not in a wholesale importation of the paraphernalia of past cultures.

There is very little "scholarly-pedantic baggage" in Hughes; but with Redgrove, perhaps because he is didactic by nature, it is sometimes possible to feel that his research material too easily becomes the matter of his poetry. To learn from animism in order to recover a sense of the sacred is one thing; but to preach to re-enter the animistic universe of "The Turning Stars" is another.

We sneak covering past the tree-trunks.
For the star of honey and wine is a rivet
And the stud of influence that causes
"Du,
We should not let its light glide into an open pupil.
Any of these stars could switch our
luck.

There are two more related problems here. The first is Redgrove's opportunism in selecting on whatever might serve as a vehicle for his imagination. One of his finest poems, the poem actually called "Superstition", in *The Weddings in Neither Power*, taken off from just the kind of superstitious jumble that I would want to question. The other problem is that orthodoxes always distort the heresies they suppress. As Ted Hughes wrote in his review of Max Nicholson's *The Environmental Revolution*:

The idea of nature as a single organism is not new. It was Mao's first great thought, the basic intuition of most primitive theologies. Since Christianity hardened into Protestantism, we can follow its underground heretical life, leagued with everything occult, spiritualistic, devilish, over-emotional, bestial, mystical, feminine, crazy, revolutionary, and poetic.

All unsystematic critics might well remark that "everything occult, spiritualistic, devilish" and so on seems a fair summary of Redgrove's preoccupations in recent years. But, unless he were purblind as well as unsympathetic, he would have to admit that these preoccupations have led to "man's first great thought".

One only has to compare *The Force* (1966) with the collections since then to realize how much Redgrove's work needed that dual resonance which occurs when the scientific sense of "ghost" shades into the sacred. Many of the poems in *The Force* are celebrations of process in entirely natural terms: but the celebration seems over-insistent, the language over-muscular. There is a sense of the poet "fighting to pull the sun down / That may not come unless you fight / Not for you anyone, Peter." For all their energy, these poems seem two-dimensional compared with others in *The Force* that look forward to Redgrove's recent work, poems such as "The Case", a long imaginative fiction that combines man, in the words of the epigraph from Hesse, as "an experient and a transition... the narrow and perilous bridge between nature and spirit".

That development through imaginative fiction has proved important. Redgrove is essentially a storyteller in his poems as much as in his novels, and more quibbles about his subject-matter dissolve if he is read as a writer of a folk-tale or a fairy-tale. In this respect, the slender publication of a cassette of Redgrove reading twenty-two of the poems from *The Apple-Broadcast* is a welcome innovation. Listening is a different mode of attention to that of reading, an older mode that goes back to childhood and back into prehistory. It is probably the right mode through which to approach a poet like Redgrove, who believes that he should not "cling to the scripture" but "improvise with spirit".

Improvisation, in fact, is also central to Redgrove's purpose. In "Song" he imagines himself in a pub, chucking his Bible in the parlour fire. The other drinkers glow.

Then all at once
With a gesture identical and almost
Of reaching through the coat right into
the heart
They all bring out their breast-pocket
bibles
Like leather coats and pile them in the
fire
And as they burn the men begin to sing...

But already, even as the song is rising on the air, Redgrove observes that: "one man does not sing. I notice him / As my song takes me with the others. He is / Setting down the words in rapid shorthand / In a small fat pocketbook with gilded edges." Redgrove is a Pentecostist, always trying to liberate the song from those small fat pocketbooks.

Another image that recurs constantly in *The Apple-Broadcast* is that of new-baked bread. Bread is a simple necessity, the bread of life; but it will not keep and it cannot be eaten once and for all. It depends on the living action of the yeast, and it has to be baked and eaten fresh every day. In this, Redgrove finds a metaphor for his own activity as a poet; and in "The Medium Will Not Broadcast" he can perhaps find a metaphor for the way he would like his poetry to be read:

But while he does his trance-work the house is a beautiful bread;
Under its tough roof of crust; entirely
one.
Beautiful, atmosphere of new-baked
bread
White and fluffy, that when he stops
Quickly grows stale and must be eaten
up;
I see the spirits at our table eating
bread
Full of zeaty yeasts, loopholes and
loopholes;
Broadcasting House continues to broadcast
But we turn away from these into our
chain and circle
Of spirit sitting next to person, spirit
person.

Originating organisms

By Stephen Clark

RUPERT SHELDRAKE:
A New Science of Life:
The Hypothesis of Formative Causation
229pp. Blond and Briggs. £12.50.
0 85334 115 0

A book which an editor of *Nature* would like to burn (pp245-6; September 24, 1981), and the *New Scientist* as vigorously defends (June 18, 1981, October 1, 1981) is unlikely to be, as Rupert Sheldrake's book, and entirely natural terms: but the celebration seems over-insistent, the language over-muscular. There is a sense of the poet "fighting to pull the sun down / That may not come unless you fight / Not for you anyone, Peter." For all their energy, these poems seem two-dimensional compared with others in *The Force* that look forward to Redgrove's recent work, poems such as "The Case", a long imaginative fiction that combines man, in the words of the epigraph from Hesse, as "an experient and a transition... the narrow and perilous bridge between nature and spirit".

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But we turn away from these into our
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Of spirit sitting next to person, spirit
person.

There, of course, is the rub. To explain anything is to assume that genuine understanding is possible, that there are laws of logic and rules

of scientific method, and dedicated investigators, and interested audience: none of these are just the same as the laws of physics, or the motions of elementary particles. An electrical discharge, as such, is not the sort of thing that can be either true or false. Reductionist materialism always was absurd, even if some other form of materialism turns out to be true (a point on which Sheldrake offers no definite judgment, though one may have one's suspicions). Even professional mechanists in fact always use explanations, concepts, theories of a higher level than the elementary, even if they profess to consider these as stop-gaps. We cannot in practice grasp the world we seek to explain without using such notions as System, Order, Organism, Goal and Truth. It is a commonplace that the universe turns out to be a complex of ordered wholes, nested each within another. We explain the behaviour of wholes by the laws appropriate to their own level, even if we claim to want an explanation in terms of their constituent parts. We cannot now predict, and have no non-metaphysical reason to suppose that we ever will be able to predict, what new properties will emerge from some hitherto unexamined combination.

If mechanism is an unrealized programme pursued with the vigour of a holy war by those with some metaphysical bias, and liable to degenerate into gibberish if it is applied also to the laws of intellect, the way is open to consider some alternative. Should we treat living organisms as entirely other than the non-living, controlled by entelechies of the kind Hans Driesch made famous? Dualism should not be a dirty word. It is for instance, almost impossible to shake the Cartesian conviction that Thought and Matter are eternally distinct (from which it follows, unless thought is purely epiphenomenal, and correspondingly incomprehensible, that the physical universe is not a closed system), but scientists are nervous of dualism of any other level. It is part of the scientific programme that there are no radical discontinuities in nature. So some version of organismism is preferable, finding systems and principles of order in non-living as well as living things. Living things are regulated in their growth, their healing, their motions by systems which in effect choose the possibilities made available by their constituents. Biological events are not wholly determined by the motions of elementary particles, for that Laplacean dream has long been abandoned: but they are not therefore merely "chance" events. What happens is selected by the "morphogenetic field" or "chreode" (Waddington's term) associated with the organism.

So far, such a field is no more than a reworking of older ideas of Systemic Wholeness. It is admittedly an ill-defined idea, postulated solely to explain certain facts of life and crystals: we have no alternative way of observing such fields, and they are by hypothesis of a different kind from "energetic" fields (gravity or electro-magnetism), whose mathematical relationships we can discover or deduce. But something like this is true of every idea in its inception: we have now discovered "genes" that they were once only theoretical constructs, mathematical devices. It is not wholly impossible that we should devise other ways of detecting Sheldrake's fields, but much of the reason for postulating them will always be theoretical convenience. They, or their equivalents, will appear in scientific journals if they are helpful to our understanding, and suggest new approaches to the world.

This is Sheldrake's major contribution. He proposes that such fields can influence each other, that they come into being by "morpho resonance". When a new organic chemical is crystallized, on the first occasion it may not crystallize at all easily, but on subsequent occasions crystallization should occur more and more easily as increasing numbers of past crystals contribute to its morpho field by morpho resonance. Sheldrake suggests that this is borne out in practice, and his theory could be checked against the conventional

alternative (that solutions are infected with seeds of the new crystal carried in the air) by simple control experiments. He proposes further ingenious tests to discover whether a new substance could be induced to form crystals first of one type and then of another, securing a future monopoly of the second by mass-producing them. Such an event, if it occurred under controlled conditions, would be incomprehensible by standard theories and lend some support to the theory of "morpho resonance" or "formative causation".

The most grotesque of Sheldrake's proposed experiments is to check whether rats in one laboratory would learn a trick more readily if many rats elsewhere were trained to do it. On the theory of formative causation the naive rats would slowly tune in on the morphogenetic field created by the successful training of the others. It is indeed a grotesque claim, and one can understand *Nature's* irritated response that Sheldrake's proposed tests are "time-consuming, inconclusive... and impractical in the sense that no self-respecting grant-making agency will take the proposals seriously" (an argument which may surprise those

who thought that scientists were dedicated seekers after truth). What has helped to improve Sheldrake's reception is that the experiments seem already to have been done, by W. McDougall, F. A. E. Crew and W. E. Agar. McDougall was testing a Lamarckian hypothesis that trained rats should produce trained or more easily trainable offspring: his results, and those of the experimenters who followed him, ended by refuting the Lamarckian claim, but leaving the odd result that unrelated rats in other laboratories had apparently got the hang of the problem. Sheldrake proposes similar tests to check details of the hypothesis, and to exclude such reasonable alternatives as are proposed.

His idea has an ancestry. He notes especially the suggestions of Alister Hardy that psychic experience forms a species-blueprint which selects within the options made available by DNA, and of N. Marshall (1975-10-1960) that ESP and memory could be both work by a sort of "resonance". His contribution has been to bring a wide range of examples, from crystallization and the folding-up of DNA to instinct and the learning of language within the theory, and to

propose detailed tests to see whether the theory performs better than its rivals. It is also interesting to note that the points so far made against him in the correspondence columns of the *New Scientist* (see August 6, 1981) are covered in his book: scientists are as prone as any other scholars to condemn colleagues without reading them.

What is the theory's importance? Perhaps none: for it may be that its predictions are not confirmed. Other, more mathematical theories may survive a refutation or two - Sheldrake's probably won't survive many failed predictions, though some form of organismism seems incumbent on us. If it does perform better than its rivals, we may set about detecting these fields by other means. What metaphysics will go along with the theory seems uncertain: it is compatible with a modified materialism, or with dualism, animism or theism, or with idealism. Those questions even still be answered at their own level. If no one bothers to try at all, it should not too easily be assumed that this is because the good sense of scientists is to ignore fatuous hypotheses. More likely, there isn't any money, and too much ill-judged metaphysics.

Biological biases

By D. M. Knight

JOHN C. GREENE:
Science, Ideology, and World View
Essays in the History of Evolutionary
Ideas
201pp. University of California
Press. £11.50 (paperback, £4).
0 520 04217 4

This spirited and readable hook betrays its gloomy title. It is a contribution to the history of ideas, and John C. Greene avoids the danger of discussing ideas as though they had no social context. There is a risk in the history of science of putting in one's thumb and pulling out plums from the past. This makes science seem something apart from the rest of culture, and immune from social influences; it can even encourage the idea that sciences have autonomous histories, and that to survey the history of "physics" from Euclid to Heisenberg is a fruitful enterprise. Professor Greene's studies show the value of a deep immersion in the intellectual history of Britain and the United States in the nineteenth century; and we can rejoice to find him saying that it "would take an Englishman to see the wise dispensation of the Creator in the competitive struggle for existence".

Four of the seven studies in the book have been previously published over more than twenty years; but they have worn well, and now cohere happily into a book. Greene's object is to find the characteristics of the "dominant", and also the "sub-dominant", world-views of a given place and period. For him, there never was nor could there be a purely scientific world-view; science is a part of man's effort to understand himself and his world. He sees the dominant view as static, while the sub-dominant was dynamic, based on matter and motion, and allowing for directional change; and this was to become the dominant world-view of the nineteenth century.

In contrast to Kuhn's "paradigms", world-views lie behind the whole thought of an era, are different in different countries and even perhaps institutions, and are more flexible than a paradigm universally adhered to could be. In an essay reprinted here, Greene shows how poorly the Kuhnian scheme of revolutions, paradigms and normal science fits the genesis, publication and reception of the *Origin of Species*. It may be consoling to those who worry whether their discipline is still in some pre-paradigmatic stage to know that Kuhn's scheme is (like Comte's famous three stages) no longer taken seriously among those studying the natural sciences - not even by Kuhn

himself in his recent study of the origin of quantum theory.

The last four essays here are particularly concerned with the relations between social and biological theories, with special reference to evolution. This leads Greene to look more closely at Herbert Spencer than historians of biology have been accustomed to do, and also at Darwin's social views. In a classic understatement, Darwin remarked in the *Origin* that in that work "light will be thrown on the origin of man and his history" but the origin of the light has been always well directed or has simply dazzled the onlookers is open to doubt. Like many contemporary Englishmen, Darwin saw the "inferior" races of mankind as being inexorably eliminated in the struggle for existence, and yet he could not go the whole hog and embrace an unqualified "social Darwinism". He recognized that helping the weak was the noblest chapter on the races of man in the condensed history of putting in one's thumb and pulling out plums from the past. This makes science seem something apart from the rest of culture, and immune from social influences; it can even encourage the idea that sciences have autonomous histories, and that to survey the history of "physics" from Euclid to Heisenberg is a fruitful enterprise. Professor Greene's studies show the value of a deep immersion in the intellectual history of Britain and the United States in the nineteenth century; and we can rejoice to find him saying that it "would take an Englishman to see the wise dispensation of the Creator in the competitive struggle for existence".

Greene tries to construct a "Darwinian" world-view common to Darwin, Spencer, Huxley and A. R. Wallace in the 1860s; the "Darwinism" thus arrived at owes more to Spencer than to Darwin himself, including atomism, evolution, British political economy, and Lockean

empiricism, with their passing into deism and then agnosticism. He defends this view against the biologist Ernst Mayr, for whom "Darwinism" is more like a Kuhnian paradigm meaning what evolutionists believe nowadays. Greene sees this world-view as lapsing by the 1880s, as Wallace turned to spiritualism and socialism, and Huxley found nature an inadequate basis for ethics, turning instead to the moral intuitions to be found in the Old Testament prophets.

In his last essay, Greene passes from T. H. Huxley to his grandson Julian, looking on the way at various neo-Darwinians and their attempts to find a meaning for life in evolution. They propound the paradox that nature, though devoid of aim or purpose, has moved upwards through time, and can teach us moral lessons. To Greene, this is the equivalent of the natural theology of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: talking for granted the values of western culture, as their predecessors did the existence and wisdom of God, these authors seek to ground them in biology rather than in Greece and Israel.

If, with Greene, we believe that science is part of a world-view, and one human activity and route to knowledge among others, then we shall reject the reductionism which makes man an organism rather than a person; and in recognizing the poverty of scientism, we shall see that though Darwinism may light us in some of our travels in the dark, it did not answer any of the old questions about man and his destiny.

Winner of the Rose Mary Crawshaw Prize for 1982

Mary Lascelles

for her book

The Story Teller Retrieves the Past

Historical Fiction and Fictitious History in the Art of Scott, Stevenson, Kipling, and some others

The foremost aim of this book is to explore the workings of the imagination as it is discernible in the art of the story-teller whose tale is set in the historic past. It develops into a comparative study of Scott, Stevenson, and Kipling - all equally concerned with change and continuity - and assesses the balance between likeness and distance which appears when their endeavours to recapture former times are set one against the other. £8.95

Oxford University Press

commentary

Constructing an ideal

By Frances Spalding

Circle
Constructive Art in Britain 1934-40
Kettle's Yard Gallery, Cambridge.

Living with the "constructive idea" in the late 1930s meant a fairly streamlined existence. One might recline on an isokon long chair but only in order to read a Penguin with the aid of a severely simple Bessie lamp. The mock-up interior found in this exhibition spurns bourgeois comforts for a rational aesthetic; it gravely displays not luxury or social prestige but right thinking. Bonks by Auden, Isherwood and MacNeice lie on top of Marcel Breuer's nesting tables, suggesting that such taste is both functional and anti-fascist. The style is studied and a little complected. If it was adopted in Hampstead, where a number of artist and designer émigrés were then living, it was too Germanic for most, too removed from the English love of prettiness. It required an overriding preference for logical design, for clean, uncluttered living. Moreover its rationalism extended beyond the living-room into the environment, forming a vision of social organization.

This exhibition (which can be seen at Kettle's Yard until March 28) pays homage to the ideas found in *Circle*, a book first published in 1937 under

the editorship of J. L. Martin, Ben Nicholson and Naum Gabo. It included contributions from leading architects, artists and designers and attempted an international survey of what they loosely termed "constructive art". It was representative of current trends rather than a manifesto for a new movement, and it was concerned with the relationships between art, science, nature and architecture. Gabo's definition of the "constructive idea in art" was vague but inspiring: "A general concept of the world", he called it; "an ideology caused by life". As an ideal, it fired others with almost religious fervour. "It is an absolute belief in man," Barbara Hepworth averred; "an expression of the significance of life, a stimulation to greater effort in living," wrote Henry Moore.

In practice, as this show demonstrates, it meant an architecture which has a mystical air, makes use of modular units and reflects the designer's ideas about people's needs rather than the sociologists'. It discovers similarities between the ferro-concrete bridges built by the Swiss engineer Robert Maillart and the tensile strength created by ribbing steel cross-bracing fibres in a Victor's Regia leaf. In art it meant the honing of an idea into relatively small-scale work in which form and content are one. It aims at objectivity and therefore favours an impersonal treatment. It aspires, with varying success, towards a universal ideal of

beauty which in its harmony and balance is intended to make the viewer critical of the disorder in everyday life.

For the most part this art only awakens the spectator to the refined sensibility that has gone into its making. Hepworth's "Two Forms" (1934) is an example. The egg forms seem to float because the shadows beneath it make translucent the alabaster base, while the nearby rectangular form, modified in relation to the egg, has been shaved into a soft wedge shape that rises like a sail. It is an acutely subtle piece, but the difference between this and Mondrian's "Composition, White and Red" (1935), which hangs in the centre of the gallery, is that between an art that cuts away in order to refine and that which intensifies and goes on adding to the sensation described. The Mondrian, with its sheer, stunning authority, is the product of something more than taste. Its single red rectangle bursts out of the top left corner like a sudden release of tension within the dynamic equilibrium held taut by the black grid.

Equally uncompromising are Nicholson's white reliefs, several of which are here exhibited. One miniature relief, projected as a backcloth for Massine's *Seventh Symphony* ballet, suggests that a theatrical element may lie behind much constructive art: John Piper's abstracts could be regarded as an arrangement of scenic flats; much of the sculpture demands

a stage-like base. It is as if this art requires a platform on which it could withdraw from life. It is contemplative and remote, and, like the book, has a highbrow seriousness that deters it universal appeal.

The hope that such rigorous purity would become popular taste seems incredible nowadays. But the book itself contains a suggestion of doubt. While Corbusier told of the greater happiness, individual liberty and collective vitality that the machine would bring, Lewis Mumford saw that, if used as an ornament, half the machine's achievements "mock the very mechanical and scientific principles it seeks to enshrine". By the time *Circle* was published a younger generation of artists were reacting against the extreme asceticism of this art. The Euston Road School was set up with a commitment to a more easily comprehended, realistic painting and in 1938 it put on the "Picture of London" exhibition to which every tenth Smith or Brown in the London telephone directory was invited. It too saw a social role for art. And within ten years one of its founders, Victor Pasmore, had come full circle, championing a return to constructivist abstraction.

The exhibition catalogue, *Circle* Constructive Art in Britain 1934-40, edited by Jeremy Lewison (89p, Kettle's Yard Gallery, £3.25 until March 28 then £4.95, 0 907074 12 X) is available from Kettle's Yard, Northampton Street, Cambridge CB3 0AQ.

Salon rituals

By Simon Berry

The Balcony
The Citizens' Theatre, Glasgow

Genet's elaborate stage directions for *The Balcony* demand a succession of ornate sets to convey the "house of illusions" visited by the brothel clients during the play.

As high priest of fetish and ritualism, Genet requested that the vestments and trappings belonging to the Bishop, the Judge and the General should be larger than life-size. The actors should wear padding and corsetry, so that after they have finished their session they shrink to human size again. Madame Irma refers to "the liturgies of the brothel" and Carmen, her aide-de-camp comments aptly: "Enlarging a brothel means rejecting the world". Genet seems to be saying that society demands figureheads, but frail humanity cannot meet the requirements without perverting itself.

Such a scenario needs acting and presentation in the style of Grand Guignol, but Philip Frowse directs the play more as a West End entertainment or a piece of unpleasant Shaw. The major triumph of the evening is the ornate set which faithfully reflects the gilded scrollwork and other rococo details of the theatre's decor. The audience, are faced by a fourth wall that for a brief moment, seems unconvincingly like a mirror. A row of footlights throws into harsh relief the clean white hand-towels, washhand basins, even a bidet, with red plush velvet furnishings and paintings placed like altar pieces. When the lights are dimmed the feeling of ritual cleansing and consecration is heightened.

Unfortunately absent in this production is a similar quality in the performance. Genet's characters are aware of their predicament and underneath these grotesque, often salacious articulations there is a human dilemma which might be labelled tragic. The play's darker side is emphasized in the revolution going on outside the bordellos. Chantal, one of the prostitutes, is taken up by the revolutionaries and used as a Joan of Arc figurehead, an ironic demonstration of the power of

the image. Strangely, this new translation by Robert David MacDonald, which tightens up some of Genet's more self-indulgent speeches, leaves out the episode where Roger the leader of the revolution protests his love to her. This gives point to the later scene where he is in the brothel (enjoying the illusion of being the Chief of Police, a strutting Gauleiter played at full volume by Patrick Hannaway) and castrates himself rather than leave to face the real world again. The power of image and ritual is too much even for those who seek to overthrow it.

The best performances come from the ladies of the brothel. Julie Le Grand plays Carmen as the whore who stoops to conquer. From being sinner, thief and soldier's mount she has found the way to manipulate those who exploit her. Ida Schuster's portrayal of Madame Irma as the owner of a well-run establishment extracts plenty of comedy from this traditional bit of male humour. But she also makes the most of the long speech rhapsodizing about her thirty-eight selons with all the gilt and fine details that give her customers such pleasure.

Hunter-Gatherer Foraging Behavior

Biographic & Archaeological Analyses
Bruce B. Berman & Eric A. Smith, editors

Nine young anthropologists contribute to this new perspective on hunter-gatherer subsistence. Blending theoretical concerns with empirical evaluations, the authors develop the methods and concepts of evolutionary ecology and apply them to the interpretation of the archaeological record of hunter-gatherers in the Old and New Worlds.

Prehistoric Archaeology & Ecology Series
Published February 1982
£12.50 cloth, £5.25 paperback

University of Chicago Press
126 Buckingham Palace Road
London SW1W 9SD

CHICAGO

commentary

An eye for effigies

By Kate Flint

Church Builders Remembered
Coopers' Hall, Bristol

Philip Larkin's esuri and countless, lying side by side on an Arundel tomb, owe their poignancy to a "sculptor's sweet commissioned grace". One hand rests intimately, unguetted, upon another. Time has brought this once private stone gesture into public prominence, turning the memorial into an unintended image of fidelity. It is on such details that Neil Andrews focuses in his Bristol exhibition of drawings, *Church Builders Remembered*. For him, as an atheist, churches exist not as spiritual centres but solely as works of art, constructed under the erratic and arbitrary patronage of Church and State. Yet since they were designed for worship, rather than as objects of aesthetic self-sufficiency, appealing features have often been hidden in dark corners or high out of mortal sight. Moreover, iconoclasts and ecclesiastical renovators alike have remoulded the original fabric, so that headless angels, empty niches and ornate Victorian pulpits accidentally supply surreal effects.

Andrews claims that most criticism of ecclesiastical art has come from within the church, thus tending to judge works according to the degree to which they embody Christian doctrine, rather than by any excellence

of design. He attempts to redress the balance in favour of secularity. Like Larkin, he favours effigies as a subject. While the individuals commemorated are perhaps best forgotten – crusaders who decapitated infidels, merchants who profited from slavery – their sculptural qualities are both decorative and humorous. Thus he focuses on the grotesque figures at the base of Edmund Blunkett's tomb in St Stephen's, Bristol; on the way in which crusaders' feet sprawl, in ungainly fashion, on their celtic foot-rests; on the expression of ecstasy on the face of another dog on a tomb in the Lord Mayor's chapel as a knight tickles him with his toe. Elsewhere, it is pattern and texture which attract Andrews's soft pencil and waxy acrylics. A leg encased in rippling chain mail emerges from its armorial casing like an insect from a stone chrysalis. Extremities are valued not for their proportions, but for the flinty pebbles which form a rough-cast mosaic on the walls of Burnham Deepdale church, or for the rubble-bull porch and grainy door which adorn the squat facade of Penn church in Buckinghamshire.

Andrews is no architectural draftsman, although capable of picking out the subtleties of Gothic stonework. Rather, he draws on church fabric as a sourcebook of design. Despite the title of the exhibition, his enterprise is not once of nostalgia; rather, like Larkin's poem, it is an attempt to look with a modern eye upon the productions of the past.



A detail from the frontispiece to the 1686 Works of Sir Thomas Browne

The Rector of Diss

By Paula Neuss

Garland for a Hoar Head
BBC Radio 3

John Arden's new work for radio, directed by Alfred Bradley, celebrates John Skelton, poet laureate, saint of Diss and rector of Diss in Norfolk. Skelton would have been pleased to hear so much of his scurrilous writing on the air over 450 years after his death but it would have disappointed him that his more stately works do not get a look-in.

The Skelton legend began in his own poems, where he sometimes presents himself as a Jew Ignoramus. It developed through the anonymous *Morte d'Arthur* (1605-1607), and for Pope he became the "beastly Skelton" quoted by heads of houses. Edmund Blunden tried to redress the balance by claiming that "Skelton habitually sets forth like a cheerful sunrise and a jolly workman", but it was too late: the lewd

legend to his logical extreme in *Garland for a Hoar Head*, where the aged poet appears as "a rather nasty old man, screeching himself under the bedclothes like a crapulous hedgehog... with fertlings and flouts" (as a Beckett hero, with "bad teeth, dandruff, eggsteins, winestains" and an arthritic knee). He is staying (in 1522) with the Countess of Surrey in the elegant castle Sheriff Hutton, and loses no opportunity to talk bewdy to her maids. In a drunken frenzy he regurgitates much of his earlier writing, so that even the more obviously beautiful poems ("My darling dear, my daisy flower") are mangled with filth, and the poet who preached the importance of measure and the necessity to "beware of excess" is swallowed up by the old soak whose most frequent word is "Gup".

Perhaps this was indeed how Skelton ended. The boozing, grumbling voice of Francis Jones, with its occasional flashes of regret and his frenzied, frenzied flashes of pride, makes us believe so. In the events of Skelton's life it is difficult to disentangle historical fact from literary fiction, and John Arden does an excellent job in providing a plausible framework (or Garland) through which to show the poems off. Skelton's writing is dramatic, but the modern audience needs help to understand it. Arden fills in the historical context through a narrator, and supplies entertaining discussions about the poems between Skelton and the Countess.

Some of these fictional footnotes to Skelton's poem are most enjoyable; for example, the explanation that Parrot speaks of "Bess" not for any of the reasons usually adduced to lecherous discussions of the poem (references to scops about Christ, etc) but because "a talking bird is highly privileged and Elizabeth is three syllables too many for his beak". It is good also to get a hint about the possible subject of Skelton's lost ballad of the "Mustard Tart" – Skelton's pet came for a particularly hot whore, according to Arden.

If Arden's Skelton seems too grotesque his Wolsey, Skelton's ruthlessly ambitious lifelong enemy, is much too polite. There is no trace in David Calder's voice of the red-hatted politician whose "Wolsey head, wet blood as lead, gapeth o'er the crown".

A Janus nature

By Robin Robbins

Sir Thomas Browne and the Baroque
Royal College of Physicians

"Prose is architecture", snarled Hamlet, "and the age of the Baroque is over." Yet its solidity endures, and its exuberance continues to delight, in literature as in the visual arts. The analogy between them, verbally elaborated fifty years ago by Morris Croll, is suggestively illustrated in the current exhibition at the Royal College of Physicians until July 2, *Sir Thomas Browne (1605-1682) and the Baroque*. Books from the College Library – chiefly editions of Browne's – are interspersed with reproductions of paintings, drawings, buildings, gardens and sculptures which show characteristics akin to those of Browne's writing.

Taking up a suggestion that his love of the complex, the bizarre, the concealed, and his self-conscious style, derived from Manierism, the introductory display juxtaposes Continental and English examples. Among these appears Lomazzo's treatise on painting, "The Bible of Mannerism", in Haydocke's translation, of which it would have been worth noting that Browne owned (and read) a copy. A drawing by Inigo Jones for a Jonssonian masque exemplifies the often crude yoking together of Gothic and Italianate in Jacobean England. Janus nature, his belief in both modern science and the persistence of this duality, embodied in the porch of St Mary the Virgin, Oxford, whose baroque sugar columns adorn an essentially Gothic structure. Forty years later, when Wren wished to fill in the junctures between the nave, choir, and transepts of St Paul's with magnificent curves, the mediocrity-mediated clergy forced him to revert to the strict cruciform plan, with its double allegiance exceptional among intellectuals, given Boyle's and Newton's beliefs in alchemy and religion. Another symptom of the transitional character of the man and the age, not shown here, is the mixed ances-

try of Browne's handwriting, a foul mongrel begotten of Elizabethan secretary-hand and italic.

The most impressive analogies of the play of light and shade in the work of Browne occur in that part of the display concerned with the period of *Religio Medici*. The meaningful highlighting of the forehead and elongated hands in Bernadino Strozzi's portrait of Monteverdi (whose music, it is observed, with its vivid variations of tempo and intensity, Browne probably heard at Padua soon after this picture was painted), and the strength, fullness, and animation of Rembrandt's "Anatomy Lesson" (painted just after he had left Leiden, a year before Browne arrived there), aptly prefigure the force and chiaroscuro of some of Browne's prose. Analogies must not be blindly pursued, however: to link allusions to intellectual ecstasy in *Religio Medici* with Ben Jonson's "St Teresa" would be to make a Crashaw of Browne. Ignoring his detached remarks about "Christian annihilation, ecstasies, exultation, liquefaction, transformation, the kiss of the Spouse, gustation of God, and ingress into the divine shadow", he did not go all the way with such Counter-Reformation enthusiasms any more than with Ranters and Fifth Monarchy Men.

The pictures around the copies of *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, his greatest work, are pleasant enough, but hardly adumbrating its riches, but with the period of *Hydriotaphia* (or *Urn-Burial*) and *The Garden of Cyrus* some delightfully appropriate images are presented. The risks and successes of Baroque tomb-sculpture are exemplified in the Babraham church: monument to the Benets – two noble animals ludicrously pompous in the grave, apparently baying and neighing to be let into heaven – and in the successfully achieved palat of the Thomas Sackville monument at Withyham, where the loving parents kneel at either side of their reclining boy. In the plans and views of gardens, quinquies are to be seen, interestingly, in Evelyn's at Sayes Court, five years before Browne's tract, and a variegated, criss-crossed alleys, at Ham somewhat later, both very different from the flamboyant curlicues of Vaux-le-Vicomte in the same period.

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CHATTO & WINDUS

commentary

An identity problem

By Ray Ockenden

Basil
BDC TV

Three things are immediately striking about the BBC television presentation of Brecht's *Baal*. One is the little-known version of the play which the director, Alan Clarke, has chosen; another the use he makes of the screen; the third, of course, is David Bowie.

What we see here is not Brecht's "first play" of 1918, but (with a few modifications), the 1926 version of it, expressly designed for the stage by an established playwright. It clearly recommended itself to Clarke for its brevity (less than half the length of the 1918 version) and for its sharper view of social realities. It is not yet a political play - only after it has been completed did Brecht immerse himself in Marx's *Capital*; but the sense of Baal as a victim of society is much stronger than before.

Those who know the earlier version will miss, in this tauter script, much of the colour and some of the poetry of the younger Brecht. We have lost the glimpses of Baal's mother, the planned bull-spectacular, and the sexual threesome. Above all, the sense of Baal's closeness to nature and his enthusiasm for the open road have diminished; by 1926 Brecht's own sensitivity to nature was going into a ten-year eclipse. Instead we have Eckhard's admiration for Manhattan and the growing frustration of Baal in this version. The extended role of Eckhard in this version provides opportunities which Jonathan Kent seizes well, making him a lustier vagabond and a more attractive character than Baal. On the other hand, the relationship between the two men, explicitly homosexual in the first version, is now less distinct, and with it the motive for Baal's act of murder.

Clarke sees this *Baal* as a play of interiors. The settings are rich in detail and carefully observed by a camera which keeps its distance and eschews close-ups. The main character is thus placed in and confined by his environment; at the same time, the viewer feels that he is not allowed to come close enough to a problematic individual to understand him. In the last scene (a change from the night setting called for by the text) daylight and nature exist outside the open door as he dies; but the camera does us no slight of it. The sense of Baal's imprisonment is heightened by Clarke's use of the split screen, which provides an emphatic frame for Bowie as he punctuates the scenes with verses from the Baal hymn - plainly and forcefully sung.

Author, Author

Competition No 61

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers to their reach this office not later than Friday, April 2. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers to be opened, or failing that, the most nearly correct - in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries should be addressed to the Editor, Times Literary Supplement, PO Box 7, New Printing House Square, Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8EZ, and marked "Author, Author" on the envelope. The solution and results will appear on April 9.

1. Here is the skull of a beaver, and that of Sir Christopher Wren. You observe, in both these specimens, the prodigious development of the organ of constructiveness.

Elsewhere the split screen is a rather mannered device. It is used to solve the problem of landscape in a still picture - a bourgeois escapism dream? - alongside which the characters are seen striding down a totally hard road. Each time they come into close-up, the camera backs to a respectful distance, as though wary of intruding. Bowie is allowed only half the screen to sing his ballad of the drowned and decomposing girl; the pre-Raphaelite *Opheelia*'s head which is his visual accompaniment lends a sentimental point in the ballad without, as was perhaps intended, "alienating" it. When, on occasion, the microphones seem to be as distanced as the camera from the action of the play, the result is not so much alienating as frustrating.

Both the translator, John Willett, and the musical director, Dominic Muldowney, have served Brecht well before and do so excellently here. Willett's happy discovery that *Opheelia*, who created the main part in 1926, had sung "Remembering Marie A." on that occasion (it is not in the text) gives Bowie his richest opportunity for continuous singing. Zoe Winstmaker is a moving Sophie, especially at her poignant abandonment by Baal, and Juliet Hammond-Hill changes with style from smart hostess to raddled pot.

Bowie's unexpectedly muted performance accords well with the cool perspective the director has adopted. Visually, he is a far cry from the uncouth giant presented by Homolka; with his slight figure and impression of pent-up energy, he rather recalls the young Brecht himself. As he changes from startling outsider to pop-star in decline, there seems to be a suggestion that we are witnessing a modern phenomenon, rather than the historical figure which Brecht clearly insisted on by adding dates to the scenes in his 1926 reworking. While Bowie's singing excludes controlled power, the restraint in his acting leads to a certain lack of variety. A sense of potential threat to a decadent society comes across, but to the end there remains an enigma about his character and aims which Bowie cannot unravel for us.

The problem seems to lie with the 1926 version itself, shorn of the heroic element and much of the flamboyance and humour of the first version. Brecht's view of Baal is here poised between a celebration of the convinced vagabond and the later conception of an alienated drop-out. In many ways we are witnessing a leave-taking from an earlier self, and it is often Eckhard's views rather than Baal's which carry the play's weight. Clarke and Bowie make a valiant attempt to rescue both the main character and the play itself, but in this version *Baal* remains a document of Brecht's changing attitudes rather than a convincing piece in its own right.

2. This is the work of the original architect. A very great man called Roger Pratt. You must always remember his name! Tom, he's not enough known. He had fifty chicks. Most of his work's been pulled down or burned by accident.

3. You too, precious! make falling Erect new wonders, and the old repair. Jones and Palladio to themselves restore, And be white'er Vitruvius was before.

The Collins Bleinhal Religious Book Award of £1,000 has been awarded to the Reverend Professor George B. Caird for his book, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible*, which was published by Duckworth in 1980.

'The Pursuit of Signs'

Sir, - Alan Sheridan (Letters, February 19) suggests that "truth" in the novel, even if we agree there is such a thing, is relative, "a shifting cultural creation". That does not dispose of it. Every experienced reader knows what he is looking for, whether in the *Odyssey* or in *Olympos*. Henry James or Henry Green. Fiction assumes a reader seeking what is true, whether for the age or for all time: the relation of the two is frequently a significant ingredient in the fiction. This has nothing to do with the techniques of realism which Alan Sheridan suggests me to favour, and which he rightly says have no more access to truth than any other kind of invention, fantasy included. But what matters is that writer and reader should know that truth is what they are after, not the invention and solution of a puzzle.

I took *Gone with the Wind* as an example because its claims to truth are marginal; but they do exist, and the "stereotyped romantic fiction" brings them out. At least I think so. Alan Sheridan does not. What matters, though, is that now we are talking the same language, and in discussion we could find out why we feel as we do. The books would be reading us, and we should be reading each other.

That is exactly what poetics tries to stop us doing. It has a horror of the personal, a squeamishness about enquiring into the sources of taste, preference and prejudice as between reader and reader. Its reason, not fully admitted, is that instruction in literature should not have to take note of personalities and backgrounds among students and teachers, any more than does maths or science. Contact with literature as a presentation of living that reveals our own lives embarrasses it. And, as Alan Sheridan implies, no modern instructor can tolerate the apparent impasse, of "This is true for me!" "But not for me!"

In fact such an impasse is just where the best discussion begins, even between critics. My eye has just lit on a superlative piece in *Essays in Criticism* for January 1982. It is by Ann Pasternak Slater and entitled "Waugh's *A Handful of Dust*: Right Things in Wrong Places". In the course of it she takes issue with Malcolm Bradbury's reading of the novel and observes that it shows "a curious insensitivity to

character and moral tone". His reading of the novel prefers not to confront Waugh's personality, the devices used for his moral purpose, his sense of the truth of the time. The author of the article examines these matters masterfully and acutely, and in so doing reveals the essential truths in the novel.

David Lodge, who has expressed some uneasiness that the most important work now in progress in criticism is no longer comprehensible to the cultivated layman, has none the less also asserted that we cannot go back to the "innocent" days of Dr Leavis. Who is being innocent here? The practitioners of poetics and semiotics could be thought to live much more out of the world than the critics of an older humanist tradition.

JOHN BAYLEY,
St Catherine's College, Oxford.

Flora Robson

Sir, - May I point out in reply to Nicholas de Jongh (Letters, February 19) that in my review of *Flora* (January 29) I did not only attribute the curtailment of Flora Robson's career to a change in theatrical fashion, but made it quite clear there were other reasons? Nor did I write, as de Jongh claimed, that she merely played repressed spinsters. In spite of de Jongh's assertions to the contrary she did not infrequently in the 1960s, and hardly at all in the 1970s. What I wrote was that she was not asked to act much, not that she was not asked at all.

GARRY O'CONNOR,
24 Chalfont Road, Oxford OX2 6TL.

Lukács and Western Values

Sir, - As an unemployed scholar - one, not at the moment able to spend his time teaching or marking papers - I resent the implication in George Steiner's letter (February 19) that the "unprecedented contempt" for the claims of the arts and of the universities "of the powers that be in many Western societies" is morally or practically equivalent to the intellectual, physical and moral terror exercised on principle against all scholars of independent spirit under Communist régimes. I may believe that it is unfortunate that so many young people of small talent, but fashionable opinions, were able to

get themselves tenured jobs in education during the late 1960s and the 1970s, and that it is equally unfortunate that the funding authorities do not have the will or the discernment to realize that the absence of new blood will lower the value of the research produced and further an already alarming provincialization; but I also believe in the Western values of freedom and autonomy and do not regard my fate as sealed simply because I cannot get a certain kind of job.

I know that many others in my position complain loudly, as does Steiner, that being made redundant, or not getting a job, is as bad as (if not worse than) being enslaved to political tyranny - but at least having work for which one is trained, I must say that I find that an incredibly arrogant and narrow view, especially for those who by training ought to be especially sensitive to questions of freedom and oppression. It displays, to repeat George Steiner's words, "unprecedented contempt" for the actions and sufferings of those brave spirits, who in the countries where Marxism has been victorious as a political doctrine risk being deprived, not only of their livelihood, but of the chance of ever doing what they really desire. How many ordinary, decent historians of literature, linguists, historians and critics are there in every East European country for every East European country for every Lukács lending his considerable talent to the "objective support" - to use a phrase favoured by Marxists - of the most tyrannical and brutal régimes on the planet today?

DAVID GRESS,
Marienborg Alle 3, 4780 Stege, Denmark.

Victorian Wedding-Nights

Sir, - J. G. Waightman's admirable review (January 1) of books by Andrea Dworkin and Susan Griffin refers to "the surprises that certain Victorian gentlemen, such as Tennyson, experienced on their wedding nights". Tennyson as well? The instance usually given is that of Ruskin (see, for example, Kenneth Clark's introduction to *Præterita*), and it would be interesting to learn more of Tennyson's presumably unfortunate experience. Were others of the Victorian literati similarly afflicted?

J. H. C. LEACH,
Pembroke College, Oxford.

Among this week's contributors

L. H. BARNFIELD is Senior Lecturer in European Prehistory at Birmingham University. His book *Northern Italy Before Rome* was published in 1971.

ARNOLD BEICIMAN's books include *Nine Lies About America*, 1972.

BERNARD BERGONZI's books include *The Turn of a Century*, 1973, and *Gerard Manley Hopkins*, 1977.

RONALD BLYTHE's new book, *From the Headlands*, will appear in the autumn.

T. B. BOTTOMORE's books include *Political Sociology*, 1979, and *Modern Interpretations of Marx*, 1981.

RICHARD BROWN is co-editor of the *Jane's Joyce Broadsheet*.

JOHN BUXTON is Reader Emeritus in English Literature at Oxford. His books include *Elizabethan Taste*, 1963.

HUMPHRY CARPENTER's biography of W. H. Auden was published last year.

STEPHEN CLARK's books include *Montaigne's Man*, 1975, and *The Moral Status of Animals*, 1977.

ERIC DE MAINT was the BBC's Music Correspondent, 1963-66 and 1972-74.

PETER FRANCE is Professor of French at the University of Edinburgh. His books include *Racine's Rhetoric*, 1965, and, as translator, *Diderot's Letters to Sophie Voland*, 1972.

ROGER GARFITT's most recent collection of poems, *The Broken Road*, will be published shortly.

CHRISTOPHER HOPE's novel, *A Separate Development*, was published last year.

P. J. KAVANAGH's *Selected Poems* will be published shortly.

JAMES KIRKPUR teaches Comparative Literature at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, Japan.

D. M. KNOTT's books include *Nottingham Science Books in English 1600-1900*, 1972.

JONATHAN LEAR is a Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge.

KENNETH S. LYNN teaches American History at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

SCOTT LEATHURK's books include *Trees of the World*, 1977, and *Exploring Woodlands and Forests*, 1978.

SIR CHRISTOPHER LEVER's books include *The Naturalized Animals of the British Isles*, 1977.

KENNETH MELLANBY's most recent book, *Farming and Wildlife*, was published last year.

PAULA NEUSS has edited *Skelton's Magnificence* for the Revels Plays.

ONORA O'NEILL is Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Essex.

RAY OCKENOE is a Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford.

ALEX PRAYOG is Lecturer in Soviet and East European Politics at the University of Reading.

JASPER RIOLLEY's most recent book, *The History of England*, was published last year.

RUTH ISABEL ROSS is author of *Irish Wild Flowers*, 1980.

FRANCES SPALDINO's biography of Roger Fry was published last year.

RACHEL TRACKETT is Principal of St Hugh's College, Oxford.

FRANK TUOHY's collection of short stories, *Live Ball*, was published in 1978.

JEREMY WALDRON is a Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford.

ALWYN WHEELER's *The Tidal Thames: the history of a river and its fishes* was published in 1979.

A gadfly in Washington

By Alastair Forbes

MICHAEL TEAGUE

Mrs. L.
Conversations with Alice Roosevelt
Langworth
203pp. Duckworth. £8.95.
0 7136 1602 1

1982 being the year Franklin Delano Roosevelt has to share a centennial with Igor Stravinsky (next year it will be Keynes and Mussolini who are so coupled), it is fitting that there should have appeared, as a curtain-raiser to its celebration and as a political footnote to his private and political life, this entertaining, partly pictorial and partly tape-recorded memoir, by his cousin Alice, President Theodore Roosevelt's eldest daughter, who, though Franklin's junior by only two years, succeeded in surviving him by no less than three decades. The book has been most agreeably put together by a handsome English resident of Washington, photographed with his heroine on the back of the jacket.

He is one Michael Teague, whom Alice seems to have acquired at the time of her life as an occasional "walker" - to borrow current American slang - and who seems to have become more often an occasional companion at her esoteric Massachusetts Avenue tea-table, where he was rather unduly *épaulé* by the inevitable Jackson's Earl Grey, than a stammering at her more exoteric but rarer dinner-parties.

Mr Teague vouchsafes in his preface details of his very first conversation with her, in which she asked him if he researched he was then conducting into the Delano family's commercial past in China had happened to uncover any ramifications with the opium trade which, she absurdly added, "would make Franklin a criminal". This clearly demonstrates just how deliquescent the old lady's memory had already become, by the time he got around to catching her. Certainly some ten or so years earlier - I myself had found that she was perfectly well aware that as far back as 1859 old Warren Delano had bought the big Rose Hill property in Hong Kong where F.D.R.'s mother was brought up, and that in 1867 his eldest daughter Dora had married my cousin Will Forbes, a junior partner in Russell and Company, then the American equivalent of Britain's Jardine, Matheson and not a lot less deeply involved in opium dealing. Of the latter circumstance one of the Kewick brothers took teasing pleasure in reminding Eleanor Roosevelt, when once she called in at the Crown Colony, a story she cheerfully repeated against herself in her autobiography, which Alice Longworth certainly read in both its successive parts. In the capitalist calendar, such cynical accidental business methods can be counted no more than venial sins, hardly to be visited on a grandson. At bottom, Franklin's only crime in Alice's eyes, though one she could not forgive, was to be the spang of the Hyde Park branch that grew to put the whole Oyster Bay plantation in the shade. As she put it to Teague: "There was were - the Roosevelt - hubris up to the eyebrows, beyond the eyebrows, and then, who should come sailing down the river but Nemeas in the person of Franklin. We were out... We had used to say 'Poor Franklin': the joke was on us."

Also sailing down the river came her first cousin Eleanor, her personality transformed and toughened by the shock of her husband's infidelity followed by his fight against painful illness and the terrible paraplegic handicap it left him for half his adult life. Of Alice, looking back on their largely shared childhood and girlhood, Eleanor, a year younger, later wrote: "While I always admired her, I was always afraid of her." Of Eleanor, Alice said to Teague that "She was always making herself out to be an ugly duckling but she was really rather attractive", much the verdict of Dorothy Strachey Busby, who had found her at the remarkable Marie Solvestre's London academy

"a tall slim elegant girl who was so much more intelligent than all the others". Indeed, if her beastly rich Hall grandmother had only had the common sense and kindness to have her teeth and jaw fixed by a competent orthodontist she might have acquired the beauty to put Alice's nose seriously out of joint in more ways than one. As for her do-gooding side, it was not a by-product of her real or imagined piety: she had inherited it from her Roosevelt grandfather. "It took with Eleanor, but not with me. I never did those things. They bored me." In Alice's long life her only unswerving aim was "to have a good time and not give a damn". It was not surprising that even his own sisters should think Eleanor far more like Theodore - who himself had a deeply ingrained do-good vein running parallel to his often regrettable sabbatist, big-stick-waving urge - than any of his own children.

Theodore had gone steadily almost since the nursery with Edith Carow from Boston (who would have been discernible in the fascinating photograph showing little Theodore and his brother Elliott - Eleanor's father - joining out from an upper window at Lincoln's funeral procession, had she not cried so much at first sight of it that she had to be "shut up in the back room to keep her quiet"). He had even proposed to her - though, as in the song, he said tomato and she said tomato - before going to Harvard, where he had met and fallen for the much prettier Alice "Sunshine" Lee. At twenty-two he had married this rather Dora Copperfield-like-looking and sounding "Proper Bostonian" girl of nineteen, proud of her "Cabot connections", who four years later died from a textbook case of undiagnosed and untreated eclampsia after giving birth to another and very different Alice. The latter, grown up, realized that her father had "tried to forget he had ever been married to my mother, to blot the whole episode out of his mind. He didn't just mention her name to me, he never mentioned her name to anyone." He also "obviously felt tremendously guilty" about marrying - after a decent interval of three years spent on the North Dakota ranch where he had once graduated from an asthma-weakening to a strenuous living Rough Rider - his first love, who he feared, would be vexed by the living reminder of his first inconstancy that was little Alice. And vexed she undoubtedly was, not least by the tomboy rebelliousness that was in part clearly Alice's attempt to break through the traumatic wall of silence surrounding her father's years with her mother. So much so that when Alice left the White House for her honeymoon and was thanking her stepmother for the reception and everything else, she was taken aback to hear Edith Roosevelt exclaim, "I want you to know that I'm glad to see you leave. You have never been anything but trouble." Greatly to her credit, Alice calmly replied: "That's alright, Mother, I'll be back in a few weeks and you won't feel the same way." Reported Alice to Teague: "And I was and she didn't. Well, I don't think she did. We were able to laugh and leer about a good many things together." That was the Boston bit they had in common.

Her recollection of her middle years (she is often pinching other people's stories, or pretending that incidents happened in her presence when anyone familiar with the real protagonists knows that they did not) is demonstrably fallible. And inevitably, in oldest age she grew increasingly addle-pated. "Don't ask Ford who the President is!" she had to be admonished by her young granddaughter in the aftermath of Watergate. Her usual inveterate schadenfreude aside, she must have enjoyed that particular Washington episode all the more for recalling that her own single effort for Uncle Sam in the First World War (apart from donating tools for good, way before the whistle went) on her first and only day at Cox Eleanor's Railroad Station Canteen for the Forces,

had been to do some rough-and-ready pre-FBI and CIA bugging of the place of assignment selected by Bernie Bruch for canoodling with a putative Rumanian Mata Hari, a dirty trick done, to Eleanor's great disgust, on behalf of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Franklin himself, neither then nor later above a dirty trick or two in any cause. Nevertheless, read in conjunction with some of the treasures unearthed from her photograph albums, her memories of childhood and girlhood constitute a real find for all students of history, whether frivolous like herself or serious like her father.

She did not often draw the best from that remarkable man, whom, she said, "I can still hear talking about Jefferson with Cabot Lodge as if he were an obnoxious neighbour of theirs". His great friend and best man, later British Ambassador in Washington, the charming Cecil Spring-Rice, used laughingly to warn visitors to the White House, "Always remember, the President's real age is about six!" All that roller-skating and bicycle-riding all over the house, to say nothing of the pony being given a ride in the lift and the bedouin complexity of T.R.'s Pled Piper welcome - "Children, come with me and I'll teach you how to walk on stilts!" - must have made that modest but stylish little Pennsylvania Avenue palace a place of prime fun not equalled since under any administration, not even that of Jack Kennedy by whom, for all his sometimes coarse Irish ways, Alice found herself as fascinated as with his more complex brother Bobby, nightly diagnosed by her as "a revolutionary priest manque".

Long before he got to Washington, Theodore had, in marked contrast to his godson Franklin later, been constantly and intimately involved in his children's lives and pastimes. There is a wonderful photograph of him at Sagamore Hill, his Long Island home, standing, atop watch in hand, as while the rest of the brood wait to come under star-sters orders, he limas his tiny youngest in a handcap running race round the Barn. That same youngest, who as soon as he was grown up, was to be killed flying in action on the Western Front in 1918, has also been caught, Panama-straw-batted in a summer meadow, by a pioneer Kodak as discerning as any *Amfiteatro* of Renoir, Jean, in a composition worthy of Renoir, Pierre-Auguste. T.R. himself has even romantically seized Alice looking as a *jeune paysanne* *du 18ème siècle* in a *jeune* here. There is also some photo of Eleanor as a child yet more touching than those that appeared in Joe Lash's dazzling and definitive biography of a decade ago, a book of which Alice had to admit to Teague was "excellent".

Teddy Roosevelt's letters to his children were understandably adored by them, not least for the droll drawings with which they were peppered. Perhaps that is why Alice, though she could talk like the devil, could herself only write like Poor Poll, even her short-lived bitchy anti-F.D.R. newspaper column soon, in the words of her spiking Editor, "falling by its own weight", just like the autobiography she with difficulty managed to squeeze from her pen to pay her husband's death duties.

Perhaps not until H.H. Asquith did T.R. have an equal as a deeply committed politician-parent. I seem to recall Violet Bonham Carter having difficulty in dating a letter, which she was sure from its idiom must have been written to her when she was a mature grown-up, until she came to its concluding sentence: "I am so glad, so interested to hear that you can now do up your own gaiters!"

Alice Longworth coolly boasted to Teague that she had been asked by a Gay Liberation group to become its first Honorary Homosexual. It is true that there is a rather fuzzy map of her arm-in-arm with Miss "Ellie" Sears, described by her as "first of the masculine young girls; snatched a lot but with great wit" and whom, recalled, as she approached old age, as



Alice Longworth inhaling Eleanor Roosevelt's toothy grin - "a contemptibly easy target" - photographed by the author, from the book under review.

In all senses the smartest Sapphic out of Boston I ever met. On the other hand she hardly deigned to confide in him about her marriage to "that insane, delightful man", the musical and singularly civilized Nick Longworth, who came to the Congress, over which he was for long to preside as Speaker, from top-drawer Cincinnati via Harvard and the Port-cella (that ghastly upper-crust little freemasonry with its babyish mumbo-jumbo, which, by excluding from its membership this young F.D.R., helped to give him the sharp motivation that was in later years to bring him down more often than not on the aide of radicalism). Alice could not the usually ridiculous Mrs Ogden Mills once pointedly remarking to her multi-millionaire husband: "Why do you bother about going into politics? You see very unattractive people there." Teague has included a charming childhood photograph of the always attractive Nick Longworth playing a barefoot Tom Sawyer by the Ohio riverbank to the Huck Finn of his equally barefoot sister Clara, of whose serious interest in and successful books about her great passion, Shakespeare, we are told nothing. Of her French husband the Comte de Chambrun we are informed only that his family owned Baccarat Glass, useful for Alice's entertaining, but nothing about their son marrying the only daughter of Pierre Laval or of their own politics, which, whenever I heard them from their lips, seemed to me to be far to the murky right of those of the white-tie-wearing, rag-toe-wearing Auvergnat Vichy Prime Minister who was later shot for treason.

One-liners are the notes that go to make the background music of America, but it turns out that most of those for which Mrs Longworth has hitherto been given the credit were not hers at all, though she may have done the most to put them into widest circulation. If her monologues to Teague's tape recorder sound genuine enough, though unmistakably edited and often bowdlerized (never could her forked tongue have been so wholly indulgent to Jackie Bouvier Kennedy, leastwise not behind her back), monologues were never her preferred art form or one in which she was at all comfortable, even as *petit comité*, rag-toe-wearing, as I think Gorb Vidal once pointed out. Edward Grey may have been as astonished as he

claimed to be in 1919 at the range of her reading, but this book hardly bears it out. She can be quite funny at the expense of the Newport rich, with whom, as her father so deplored, she loved to spend so much of her time. (There is indeed a prize picture of Grace Vanderbilt, complacently allowing diamonds to drip down her front as if she were the final set-piece of a fireworks display.) She did not share Eleanor and Franklin's affection for Quincey Adams, and shocked them both by loudly interrupting his funeral service, before his coffin had left the church, in order to invite them to Sunday supper. She surely had not agreed with his father Arthur Ballou's view that it didn't make the slightest difference who occupied the White House. She almost certainly would have preferred his grandfather and his opinion that the United States should be governed by the rich, the well-born and the able, and she clearly was at one with John Quincy Adams who "didn't mind a bit of sulphuric acid in his tea".

Her dinner parties may well have added something over the years to the galaxy of a nation's long all-too-dreadfully-parochial capital (like little London today), though she never wielded any political influence. She was a passable mimic, and more famous than she deserved for the faces she liked to pull. Eleanor with her teeth was a contemptibly easy target who heaped coals of fire on Alice, when with unerring bad-taste she did her turn before F.D.R.'s guests in the White House, by murmuring, "Alice has a talent for that sort of thing." Her granddaughter's boyfriend rather cruelly decided that, when finally came the end which, like illness, she had always apprehended with a most unphilosophical dread, there should be recorded as her occupation on her death certificate "Gadfly". Having in her lifetime enjoyed her company in small doses, I would myself hesitate for an epitaph for her between her cousin Eleanor's earlier puritanical judgment, "too much ease, too much dependence, too much luxury of every kind", and, with Teague's mugging up shots of her in Quincey Adams' "The Poul Flend Ribbertlibbet", who presides over mopping and mowing. But I very much enjoyed Mr Teague's worthwhile exhumation and heartily applaud his excellently produced book and its most captivating illustrations.

The state of the nation

By Craig Brown

LINCOLN ALLISON:
Condition of England
Essays and Impressions
221pp. Junction Books. £12. (paper-
back, £4.95).
0 86245 032 2

RICHARD WEST:
An English Journey
196pp. Chatto and Windus. £8.50.
0 7011 2584 5

When he was living in America in 1976, Lincoln Allison read a letter in the *Guardian* from an American academic who had spent a joyous ten months in North-West England with his family and was soon to leave England "with regret and envy. We hope (the writer continued) that you all truly appreciate your fine social services, National Health Service, public transit system, National Trust, BBC, untroubled villages and ships, decent public housing, community arts and drama, great cultural heritage and gloriously preserved countryside." He was much distressed, though, by the persistent and escalating negativity of the Press... in portraying the state of the country." Surrounded by the cultural vacuum of California, the homesick Allison agreed with the letter-writer; England, he believed, had improved over the past twenty-five years, to the extent that "the quality of life compares very favourably with any real time and place." He decided to write a book "to point out to the English certain collective goods which they possess as a people, and which they undervalue."

A former *Guardian* journalist, Richard West, took a different view. After many years as a foreign reporter he had returned to consider a country that, in his view, had deteriorated alarmingly in twenty-five years: "England is, rightly, worldwide object of scorn and pity. But I am able to see England partly through foreign eyes; and what I see frightens me."

However much one may sympathize with some of Richard West's specific loathings - council euphemisms, motorways, VAT, the abolition

of the old counties and so on - it is hard to ignore the determined insensitivity that pervades every page of *An English Journey*. Thus, when he writes "In modern England few doctors visit the sickest patient, even a child", or "The Lake District must be the only part of England where you can still burn coal in your fire", he is writing in all seriousness.

In his introduction, West attempts to forestall criticism by stating that his is "not an objective or even a fair book". But it is doubtful whether such a polemical approach can be effective when applied to subject-matter so familiar to his potential readership. If a book is to call itself "An English Journey", then it should contain some element of surprise at the way things are in strange places, some assurance to the reader that this is more than a journey around the writer's prejudices: a journey around the writer's prejudices, corrupt politicians, skyscrapers, shopping centres and social workers. In the Anglican Cathedral in Liverpool, for instance, he discovered a pamphlet by the Reverend Jack Burton entitled "Driven to Prayer", concerning his ministry as a bus driver; in Birmingham he saw that Spaghetti Junction is set to collapse; in Manchester he stared in horror at the "hideous" theatre in the round and the "grotesquely hideous" Arndale Centre; in Bristol, at three in the afternoon, he was propositioned by two "hideous lads" and in Worcester he browsed the "hideous" shopping centre.

West closes his book with a quotation from Chesterton on Cobbett: "Most men with any conviction in a confused and complicated age have had the almost uncanny sensation of shouting at people that a mad dog is loose or the house is on fire, to be met merely with puzzled and painfully respectful expressions, as if the remark were a learned citation in Greek or Hebrew."

But as Allison points out, in England the age is always confused and complicated, the house has always been on fire. What is probably unique about our own age is the number of people who share West's view of things, clinging to pessimism as if it were a national identity card. The assumption behind all public discussion today is that England is inadequate.

West seems to like the countryside

primarily because it is not urban. Allison, on the other hand, finds much of immediate interest in the country, being calm and alert enough to enjoy its sounds, its vistas, its animals and people. In an essay in the first half of the book, he points out just how much countryside is left, contradicting West's view that there is a dual carriage round every corner. People "consistently" overestimate the extent of urban land, taking the most debased study, the urban area of England and Wales is now about eleven per cent. This distorted view, says Allison, is due to the fact that most people, when they leave the cities, tend to view the country from roads. "To take an extreme example, you can drive through much of Lancashire and conclude that it is almost entirely 'built up' but if you fly over it or get out on to the 'tops' it's sometimes difficult to see where so many people live."

Allison's optimism does not extend to the standardization of buildings, the brutalization of "inner cities" and what he sees as the stupid intolerance of the working class. His, however, is the truer, fresher picture of England because his writing conveys the sense of a man travelling and looking, whereas West, apart from the odd anecdote, might have written his journey without moving from, say, the bottom of the central column of Spaghetti Junction. For West, towns are little more than off-stage prompts for general tirades. Allison separates his theories and his travels into two different sections of his book, allowing the one to complement the other, free from the befuddlement of conceit or rage.

He has argued the case of contentment most acutely, though he must realize that in the unlikely event of contentment spreading over England, all may well be lost. For as the English imagination is at its most anergic when damping the English weather, and English prose is most vibrant when demolishing heroes, so England needs its tuning dissonant if it is to remain as sceptical, various and tolerant as it is. Of course Allison is right to welcome the Gillette Cup as a fine invention, but West's belief that "Cricket is now just a form of promotion for cigarettes and American razor blades" seems much more English.



A sperm whale fishery off the North Cape, New Zealand - an engraving from the author's drawing reproduced in New Zealand: being a narrative of travels and adventures during a residence in that country between 1831 and 1837 by Joel Samuel Polack; one of the items offered in a sale of Australiana to be held at Sotheby's, 34 & 35 New Bond Street, London, on April 6 and 7.

Muscatel with milk

By Erik de Mauny

JOSEPH HONE:
Gone Tomorrow
144pp. Secker and Warburg. £6.95.
0 436 20084 8

In this era of supersonic communications, there are travellers and there are package tourists. The former seem to be a sadly diminished and perhaps vanishing breed, but Joseph Hone knows where his heart is, and it is firmly and defiantly among them. He has the necessary basic equipment: a love of walking, an indifference to discomfort, and a sharp nose for unexpected and savoury detail. In an earlier collection, *The Dancing Whalers*, the targets of his investigation were fairly well off the beaten track: Malaya, Malawi, Mount Kilimanjaro. In this he has turned an enquiring gaze on Europe-on-the-deorstep, to reveal that even the beaten track can be made to yield up plenty of fresh surprises.

Joseph Hone has the traveller's knack of arriving in a place just as something interesting is happening - on his first evening in Barcelona, they were dancing the *sardana* in the Cathedral steps right in front of his hotel - and a keen eye for local eccentricity. Here he is in a tiny, back-street bar, in Vienna in the Pyrenees.

A mountain lady, all in black, was cleaning and massaging her toes in one corner. Muscatel, for some strange reason, seemed the going drink, in thimble-sized glasses. I had a few, warming myself as the evening came up outside with a warm chill. This was much better. I thought: they'd almost certainly have a flea-ridden bed for the night - and Miranda would be here any moment.

But instead I heard some leaden bells ringing out in the alleys - and quite suddenly three large and amiable Jersey cows pushed their way through the curtains into the bar, stomping slowly into a back room, eying the drinkers casually as they went. No one paid them the slightest attention. I heard what I supposed was the kitchen.

Hone had a number of other such happy experiences. He especially loved Lisbon, and spent many blissful hours in a sun-dappled square in the city. He equally enjoyed a *savonaria*, in a remote part of Finnish Lapland; and his generous appreciation of Finland's dilemma makes a welcome antidote to those in the West who speak of glibly of "Finlandization" without themselves having to live on such a dangerous border.

In spite of these pleasurable moments, *Gone Tomorrow* opens on a sombre note, at Passchendaele, and closes on an even more sombre one. In Poland, at Passchendaele, gazing over the cornfields that cover nearly 100,000 war dead, the author reflects that, in spite of Britain's entry into the Common Market (or because of it?), a large segment of the Continent now seems far more "foreign" than it did only a generation or so ago. "For a strange thing now is how relatively few British people, in their pursuit of the sun, seem to know much about northern or central Europe, whereas, before the war, the Low Countries, along with the Rhine Valley, Bavaria, the Tyrol, the Wienerwald, all these were principal holiday grounds for the British middle classes."

In criticizing this new and perverse form of insularity, Hone also looks sharply askance at the ugliness of some major Western cities: the anonymity of central Madrid, the architectural chaos of Brussels. But in Eastern Europe, he ran into something much nastier. Arriving in Prague, that beautiful city, he found everyone surly and bad-tempered, the lights dimmed in some unexplained power failure, the air thick with frustration, and couldn't understand why. Then, on his way through the hotel lobby, the photographs on the evening front page provided the answer. Brezhnev had arrived in Prague that morning. It was the tenth anniversary of the Prague Spring.

Mr Hone found much the same atmosphere in Poland early last year, plus endless queues and general corruption. Tourists lurked by the hotel door, avid for hard currency, and offered to introduce him to a "gentle Polish dissident" for thirty dollars. They settled for less than half that, and the author was directed to a small antique shop crammed with swords and epaulettes and old Polish army medals. The veteran owner was saddened but not surprised, and showed him out with the comment - "So they're selling dissidents to tourists on the streets now, are they? What next?"

This episode reads like a grotesque curtain-raiser to the splitting of Poland which has now taken place under Jaruzelski's military rule. It also gives point to a remark by Alexander Solzhenitsyn in a recent article on Poland: "There is not a single nation in Europe which is not ready to provide Communism with all the hangers-on it needs."

There are one or two minor irritations and errors in this otherwise admirable collection. They are based on a series of BBC scripts, but one could have done without phrases like "In my earlier talks" (Finland and Hungary are not the only non-Indo-European languages spoken on the Continent: Estonian and Lappish belong to the same Finno-Ugric group, together with several minor languages of European Russia).

For practical purposes

By Onora O'Neill

B. D. RAPHAEL:
Moral Philosophy
117pp. Oxford University Press.
£3.95 (paperback, £2.50).
0 19 219149 7

Academic philosophers of most persuasions agree that moral philosophy should be taught, but hardly any of them agree on how this should be done. One result is that a lot of introductory books on moral philosophy are published, but none has become a standard text. In recent years there have been two quite widely favoured pedagogical approaches. Both offer the student evolution of assumptions and arguments "and clarification of concepts". Moral philosophy so construed is neither constructive nor able by itself to lead to any practical conclusions; it is an enterprise that is parasitic upon the existence of moral practices, but not, in Raphael's view, restricted to reflection on any single moral practice or set of practices. He takes it for granted that some central moral concepts are cross-culturally available, so that distinct and incompatible practices can be compared and confronted. Those forms of moral relativism which are rooted in the view that distinct practices are mutually inaccessible and incomprehensible are therefore not discussed. However, at least some beginning students, especially if they have read some anthropology or sociology, or even some Wittgenstein, may be bothered by the possibility of relativism or amorality, and may be unhappy about starting with the assumption that there are competing practices and theories available for comparison.

Raphael's survey of moral theories embarks from the security of shared moral and philosophical discourse. He begins by deploying a philosophical distinction which even the beginner may be familiar, and divides moral theories into the empirical and the rational. Under the first head he includes both Hume's naturalism of sympathy and egoistic forms of naturalism, while rationalism is sketchily characterized as invoking formal considerations such as universality and necessity. He then passes from eighteenth-century to twentieth-century forms of ethical naturalism and rationalism, looks briefly at some of the difficulties of each, and concludes that prescriptivism combines the persuasive features of both in that it focuses on the pragmatic rather than the descriptive mode of language, yet allows for the rational character of ethical evaluation.

Prescriptivism then provides a vantage-point from which to survey a standard selection of moral theories. Raphael's presentation of utilitarianism and intuitionism is concise, clear, and genuinely accessible to the beginner. He provides historical context, telling examples and connections to his own position. The discussion of utilitarianism is particularly pleasing for the natural way in which economic thinking - surely one of the principal utilitarian legacies - is introduced into the discussion. A great deal is covered in a short space without any sense of crowding.

The discussion of Kantian ethics is less good. Raphael introduces heteronomy (or perhaps merely prescriptivism?) into his reading of the Categorical Imperative, which he paraphrases as a matter of "asking whether you would want everyone to act in that way"; this reading entails some incompleteness in his account.

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Extremes of authenticity

By Jeremy Waldron

JOHN CHARVET:
A Critique of Freedom and Equality
203pp. Cambridge University Press.
£17.50.
0 521 23727 0

John Charvet's book is a critique of freedom and equality only in the sense that Kant's masterpiece was a critique of pure reason: it is not an attack on these ideals, but an attempt to discover new theoretical foundations for something that has been taken for granted in everyday life. Certainly, there is a critical side to Charvet's writing. He presents a sustained and potentially devastating attack on the ethical theory of liberalism, materialism, or, in this case, existentialism which are in fact held only by a few of them, and usually in a highly qualified form. Certainly, one of the liberal philosophers discredited by Charvet ever subscribed explicitly to the extreme view about authenticity which he has set up to make his criticism work. Many of them did hold the view that it was wrong to impose values on the individual from the outside. But that is because they thought there was something wrong with coercion, not because they thought respect for autonomy was intrinsically inauthentic. The liberal's determination to eliminate coercion from moral life need not blind him to the obvious truth that some values are more worthy of "authentic" adoption than others.

The attack on liberalism is the most substantial and interesting part of the book. Liberals take humans to be moral self-constituting beings capable of choosing for themselves the ends and values whose pursuit is giving meaning to their lives. When an individual has been forced on him or her values dictated to him from the outside, his autonomy is insulted and his life is deprived of the basis that gives it its inherent worth. Demands for individual freedom, then, are based on each person's integrity as an autonomous, self-constituting agent. So far, so good. But, as we all know, moral life consists not just in demands for one's own freedom but also in respect for the similar demands of others. On Charvet's view, this is where the problem lies. The liberal ethic of "authenticity" requires the individual to recognize no values except those he has constituted for himself. How, then, can he be required to respect the ends and values of others when they differ

from his own? Of course, he sees that other people exist and he can even infer that they are embarked on an enterprise of self-constitution too. But their values, of necessity, are not his values, and, except at the risk of undermining the authenticity of his own moral growth, he cannot take them as seriously as he takes his own. In a Hobbesian way, he may be wary of offending them - he may even offer them assistance if there is something in it for him. But the requirement of authenticity precludes any more lofty respect for their values than this.

This dilemma is a worrying one - at least to anyone who holds the extreme view about authenticity that Charvet describes. But this raises a tedious familiar point. The opponents of liberalism have a habit of basing their criticisms on the indiscriminate attribution to all liberal philosophers of views (like egoism, atheism, materialism, or, in this case, existentialism) which are in fact held only by a few of them, and usually in a highly qualified form. Certainly, one of the liberal philosophers discredited by Charvet ever subscribed explicitly to the extreme view about authenticity which he has set up to make his criticism work. Many of them did hold the view that it was wrong to impose values on the individual from the outside. But that is because they thought there was something wrong with coercion, not because they thought respect for autonomy was intrinsically inauthentic. The liberal's determination to eliminate coercion from moral life need not blind him to the obvious truth that some values are more worthy of "authentic" adoption than others.

Charvet's picture of liberalism, then, is something of a caricature. But it is far from being a worthless one. It forces us to reconsider the foundations of liberal theory, to state them a bit more carefully, paying more attention to their implications for the relation of self to others; and that is no mean achievement. Moreover, exaggerated or not, Charvet's argument provides a new perspective on the perennial difficulties of Western political philosophy. He suggests that the dilemma of authenticity lies behind Hobbes's problems about obligation, the inadequacy of Locke's theory of property, the tensions in Rousseau's picture of man, the failure of the Categorical Imperative to generate adequate principles of duty, the fallacies of classical utilitarianism, and the heroic collapse of John Rawls's revival of the myth of the social contract. There is much of interest here, but it has more to do with Charvet's discussion of the particular philosophers than with his general criticism of their theories.

The second and third parts of the book are much shorter. They deal respectively with the views of non-individualist thinkers (Hegel and Marx) and with Charvet's sketch of new foundations for freedom and equality. The attack on Hegel and Marx is familiar: they place too little emphasis on the value of individual life, too much on the community. Still, in the end, Charvet's own theory turns out to be broadly Hegelian in structure and content. One's life has value, he argues, not on its own terms, but on account of its relation with other lives: in the mutual valuations of people who care about each other, and, more generally, in the "associated will" of a moral community. Like Hegel's notion of "Absolute Right", individual rights to freedom, on Charvet's view, are conceded only to make individuals more apt for the intercourse with others which is the real stuff of ethical life.

We are not short of books attacking the foundations of liberalism and resurrecting some sort of neo-Hegelianism in its place. But this is one of the more interesting attempts. Facing a desperately abstract area of moral philosophy, it remains lucid, on the whole, jargon-free, and well-written throughout. And even if its attack on liberal philosophy is ultimately unsuccessful, it should be taken seriously as a warning of what an unreflexive liberalism in the modern era might easily become.

The other main virtue of the book is the sober, solid judgment employed in explicating Aristotle. Ackrill has spent his professional life patiently and carefully exploring his thought. I do not think the book succeeds, however, in its stated aim of bringing out the excitement of Aristotle's investigations, but I do not see how any introductory book could do that. Aristotle is an ancient intellectual giant. Give a student this book, a good introductory lecture course, and the texts themselves, and then he will be able to find Aristotle exciting.

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of the distinction between categorical and hypothetical imperatives, since he cannot distinguish the former as not conditional upon any desires. He also suggests that the principle of utility can be derived from the injunction to treat others as ends, since that is a matter of having regard for their desires, hence for their happiness. But Kant argued only that some regard for the permissible desires of others is required, which is far less than the principle of utility enjoins. It is simply false that "Kantian ethics implies the gist of utilitarianism".

His tour completed, Raphael moves on to two systematic concerns: the relation of ethics to politics and the problem of free will. Neither problem is connected very specifically to the prescriptivism Raphael has adopted. The discussion of politics concentrates on justice and liberty and includes a brief account of Rawls's theory of justice and another of Sir Isaiah Berlin's views on negative and positive liberty. Both discussions are admirably clear and succinct, but they are

adjuncts rather than continuations of the main argument.

Free will is discussed last in the book, but is taken as posing a problem which is fundamental to the possibility of moral philosophy. Again the discussion is splendidly clear, and genuinely introductory. It does not try to convince the beginner that compatibilism provides a quick solution. However, the placing of the chapter may puzzle some beginners. If metaphysical considerations, such as the nature of human freedom, are among the presuppositions of morality and so of moral philosophy, how can their discussion be postponed until the end of a book on moral philosophy? Indeed, if metaphysical (and epistemological) considerations are fundamental, is it possible to write an introduction to moral philosophy alone? Since introductory books cannot do everything, one can perhaps only reasonably demand that they do what they aim to do well. It is the merit of Raphael's book that it can in the main be faulted only for what he chooses to omit and not for what he includes.

Arguing with Aristotle

By Jonathan Lear

J. L. ACKRILL:
Aristotle the Philosopher
160pp. Oxford University Press.
£6.95 (paperback, £2.95).
0 19 219131 4

Aristotle the philosopher: what more difficult subject could there be? No one has ever matched his combination of breadth and depth of thought. To do justice to the depth of any aspect of Aristotle's thought, it seems that one must ignore his comprehensive vision; in not any survey, condemned, then, to superficiality and misinterpretation? Apparently not, for J. L. Ackrill has done a fine job of portraying Aristotle's ideas over a wide range of topics, while leaving the reader with the sense that there is much more to be thought about.

Ackrill aims to engage in philosophical argument with Aristotle. While it is necessary to understand Aristotle to argue with him, Ackrill admits that in moving from exegesis to argument he will employ certain twentieth-century concepts and arguments foreign to Greek thought. He is refreshingly unapologetic. This, he says, is the inevitable cost of arguing philosophically with Aristotle rather than simply trying to understand him. It is permissible just so long as one is aware of what one is doing: "It is a fault (the fault, of anachronism) only if one's aim and claim is to be doing purely historical work."

One of the two main virtues of the book is the sober, solid judgment employed in explicating Aristotle. Ackrill has spent his professional life patiently and carefully exploring his thought. I do not think the book succeeds, however, in its stated aim of bringing out the excitement of Aristotle's investigations, but I do not see how any introductory book could do that. Aristotle is an ancient intellectual giant. Give a student this book, a good introductory lecture course, and the texts themselves, and then he will be able to find Aristotle exciting.

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ethics. Starting with the *Physics* is, I think, the best way to reveal the unity in Aristotle's thought.

The weak link in the book is the chapter on his logic. Here Ackrill seems to lose sight of his audience. The prose becomes exceedingly dry and there is virtually no discussion of why anyone should be interested in formal logic. A student who is not already motivated to study logic will, I fear, give up when he reaches this chapter. There is a long-standing debate as to whether the syllogisms should be construed as valid inferences or as single conditional sentences. While I think it is clear that the syllogisms are inferences, I would not cavil here if Ackrill put a solid case for treating them as conditionals. However, he chooses to present syllogisms both as inferences and as conditionals while refraining from providing the motivation for either treatment. This can only confuse a student.

In general, though, Ackrill's presentation is clear, and laced with interesting suggestions. I shall mention one from his chapter on ethics. Students of the *Nicomachean Ethics* have long been troubled by Aristotle's apparently contradictory advice to argue with him, Ackrill admits that in moving from exegesis to argument he will employ certain twentieth-century concepts and arguments foreign to Greek thought. He is refreshingly unapologetic. This, he says, is the inevitable cost of arguing philosophically with Aristotle rather than simply trying to understand him. It is permissible just so long as one is aware of what one is doing: "It is a fault (the fault, of anachronism) only if one's aim and claim is to be doing purely historical work."

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A Tory among Turks

By Jasper Ridley

ROBERT BLAKE:
Israel's Grand Tour, Benjamin Disraeli and the Holy Land 1830-31
141pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £8.95.
0 297 77910 9

From May 1830 till October 1831, Benjamin Disraeli went on a Grand Tour, visiting Granada in Spain, the British territories of Gibraltar, Malta and Corfu, and several parts of the Turkish Empire - Albania, Greece, Constantinople, Cyprus, Jerusalem and Egypt. When he returned to England twenty-five years later, he was a changed man. He had seen the world, and he was a changed man. He had seen the world, and he was a changed man. He had seen the world, and he was a changed man.

The facts about the journey are well known. Every biographical essay on Disraeli refers to it. Monty Penny in 1910 devoted a chapter to it in what became the mammoth Monty Penny and Buckle biography; the chapter, one out of eighty-nine in the biography, was in fact nearly half the length of the whole of Robert Blake's book, and consisted almost entirely of long extracts from Disraeli's letters. Many of these extracts are boring, but they contain

well-written descriptions of the places which he visited. It is a pity that Lord Blake did not quote some of these vivid passages; but he has given us many other interesting quotations which tell the story of Disraeli visiting bazaars, smoking pipes six feet long, and meeting Mehmet Ali at Situbra; and there is a brief and discreet reference to the charms of a lady in Malta. Disraeli, unlike his friend Clay, did not boast of his misours.

Blake is far too conscientious a historian to try to justify his book by far-fetched theories. He does not claim that it contains any new material, and believes that the most important events of Disraeli's political career, his overthrow of Peel and his reaching "the top of the greasy pole" and becoming Prime Minister, were unaffected by his travels in 1830-31. But he has no doubt that the tour influenced three of his novels, *Coningsby*, *Alroy* and *Tancred*, as well as his attitude towards Judaism and his views on the historical destiny of the Jewish race.

He also thinks that Disraeli's conduct during the Eastern crisis of 1875-78 would not have been quite the same if he had not visited Turkey in 1830-31. Lord Blake does not elaborate this statement, and would undoubtedly influence on Disraeli's decision, as against Russell, to support Turkey against Russia, for the British government had been pursuing this policy since the days of Palmerston, who never went to Turkey. Gladstone believed that Disraeli's total lack of

sympathy for the oppressed Christian populations of the Turkish Empire was due to the fact that these Christians, like their Russian protectors, persecuted the Jews. Blake attributes it in part to Disraeli's fascination with the Turkish way of life as he saw it in 1830-31. As Blake points out, Disraeli was an odd man out among British nineteenth-century politicians in having no sympathy with the struggle of oppressed nationalities fighting for freedom; but his letters of 1830 suggest that he had formed these opinions before he went to the Turkish Empire, and that he already admired ruthless dictators, not nationalist rebels. When he met the Turkish Grand Vizier in Albania, who had executed four thousand people in three months, "we congratulated him on the pacification of Albania". He wrote to his friend Benjamin Austin about "the delight of being made much of by a man who was daily deceiving half the Province."

As always, Robert Blake is informative and amusing. Some of the most interesting parts of the book are the little bits of information which he knows in for his reader - for example, that there were more Greeks living in the nineteenth century than in Athens or any city in Greece. His judgments on various subjects, such as Byron's militancy, incompetence, and political shrewdness, and on some of Disraeli's novels, are outspoken, and not always complimentary. The result is a book, lively, though it is certainly not Lord Blake's most important, is interesting, lively and a pleasure to read.

The Greeks go West

By David Ridgway

EMILIO GABBA and GEORGES VALLET (editors): *La Sicilia Antica*. Two volumes. 780, 627pp. Società editrice: Storia di Napoli del Mezzogiorno continentale e della Sicilia.

Two volumes divided into five parts and amounting to a total of 1,407 pages, all of which are slightly more than a foot high: is there really so much that can usefully be written about ancient Sicily? Having read the several hundred thousand words involved, I have no hesitation in replying "yes" and I applaud this enormous limp issue of the "ancient" section of the publisher's full-scale *Storia della Sicilia*. I wish they had done the same with their *Storia di Napoli*, published some years ago; and I would also like to know more than I do about the prospect of a *Storia del Mezzogiorno continentale*. There, no less than in Sicily, information and the literature grow with dizzy speed - a stark warning to non-Italian readers which prefaced the first (and, alas, the last) review in English of new South Italian and Sicilian discoveries prepared by the late Martin Frødenksen in 1977.

It must be said at once, however, that these five tomes constitute very much less, and at the same time very much more, than a definitive "History of Ancient Sicily". They may best be described as a set of "Materials" for such a work, covering the period between the Lower Palaeolithic and the sixth century AD. The editors are to be congratulated on their smooth and efficient solution of the problems that inevitably arise when archaeologists and historians are expected to cooperate; and the very real hurdle of translation (a number of the contributions were originally written in French) has been cleared triumphantly.

Within the vast time-span represented, Sicily before the Greeks is disposed of in the first eighty-six pages, and only 153 pages are required by the island's artistic, literary and political developments between unification under Roman provincial rule in 211 BC and the beginning of the Byzantine period around 550 AD. The lion's share of the space available is thus allotted to the five centuries during which Sicilian affairs are traditionally held to be coloured - indeed determined - by the presence of Phoenicians, Greeks and Carthaginians. This detailed, frankly disproportionate, attention to an externally defined period certainly coincides with most people's idea of Sicily, whether ancient, medieval or modern. After all, in the words of the current English-language publication edited by the Sicilian Regional Tourist Board, "Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Goths, Byzantines, Arabs, Normans, Spaniards and Austrians in turn conquered Sicily... a list and an attitude which have their roots in Tommaso Fazello's *De Rebus Siculis*, first published in 1558 (and discussed here in an all too brief chapter by Arnaldo Momigliano on the rediscovery of ancient Sicily).

However, this may be, I feel strongly that a new standard work might reasonably have been expected to offer a fuller reflection of the considerable recent advances made by pre- and proto-historians currently operating in Sicily. Unlike so many of their English-speaking counterparts, they have not yet found it expedient to render their story unfit for civilized company; and it is indispensable to a proper understanding of the ancient Mediterranean as a whole. Furthermore, and for obvious reasons, the findings of Iron Age archaeology in particular provide important information about the Sicily found by the Phoenicians and Greeks. The not infrequent references in the main part of this work to the material evidence for hellenization (and punification) would have gained much from a longer profile of the indigenous cultures in

their pre-colonial state - and, incidentally, from more illustrations of their far from second-rate contributions to what the Tourist Board (rightly) calls a "unique heritage of art treasures".

It is simply not fair to allow historians to wrestle virtually unaided with the ancient written sources concerning the identity and affiliations of the non-Greek, non-Punic Sicilians and Sicels, respectively east and west of the Platani (Halycon), and the notoriously elusive Elymians in the north-west - to say nothing of the Italic "Ausonian" and "Morgentan" enclaves revealed by archaeology around Milazzo (Mylae) and Serra d'Edda (Morgantina). On the other hand, after reading the rest of this work, I am beginning to wonder whether ethnic problems are necessarily the most interesting ones now available for study.

This apparently heretical question is prompted by Parts Two and Three of Volume One, which together summarize the findings of a research programme on the Greek cities in Sicily, co-ordinated over more than a decade by four distinguished contributors. They are: Roland Martin (of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres), Paola Pelagatti and Giuseppe Voza (past and present Archaeological Superintendent of Eastern Sicily), and Georges Vallet (Director of the Ecole Française de Rome). Co-editor of these two volumes after for long doyen of the foreign archaeological community in Italy). The themes tackled in Part Two amount to a new and original treatise on colonial town-planning: urban structures in relation to history, civil and religious monumental architecture; domestic architecture; and, finally, the social and economic information that may legitimately be deduced from the study of cemeteries and of objects. The picture that is emerging - for, excitingly, this is no more than an interim statement - adds much to the late T. J. Dunne's bald statement that "some of the earliest big building and engineering works were Sicilian", and even more to his extraordinary affirmation that "the West has no place for fruitful political ideas."

From hunting to farming

By Lawrence Barfield

GRAEME BARKER: *Landscape and Society Prehistoric Central Italy*. 281pp. Academic Press. £13.80. 0 12 078630 8

At first sight, the story of early man in the central Italian peninsula, before the emergence of Etruscan and Roman civilization, is hardly the most arresting of subjects. The prehistoric inhabitants of this region indeed seem to have been more isolated and conservative, and to have shown less initiative than their neighbours to the north and south. Graeme Barker, however, by applying to a somewhat drab collection of prehistoric finds a whole range of recently developed archaeological theory, techniques and interpretations, has produced a case-study from which students and professionals, in all fields of prehistory, can benefit.

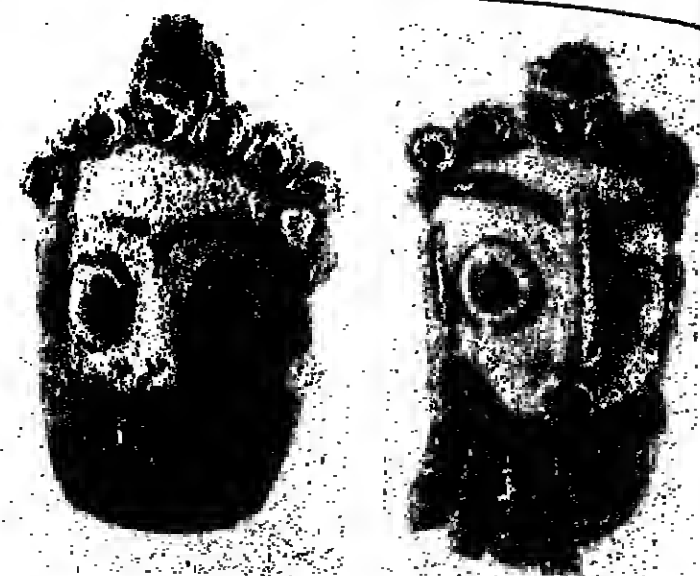
Landscape and Society deals with the development of human culture, the economy from the time of the first Palaeolithic hunters to that of the bronze-using communities of the second millennium BC. Less than a third of the book is devoted to the traditional stuff of prehistory - the chronology of material culture, the chronology of material culture, the chronology of material culture. Instead, the emphasis is on the economy and social organization, how and why the observed development and changes took place. Cultural development in prehistoric Italy,

Part Three contains an encyclopedic description of the individual Greek cities from Agrigento (Agrigento) to Zancle (Messina), and also of four massive hellenized centres (Solunto, Monte Iato, Segesta and Morgantina). The entries are arranged under the following uniform headings, with additions and subtractions as required: history, town site, cemeteries, territory, coinage and detailed bibliography. The excellent detailed plans provided of each site are perhaps the most important single feature of the whole work, and photographic coverage is generous in quantity and high in quality.

The combined effect of these two central parts is almost entirely positive. Almost, but not quite. Many Italian friends have commended these 530 pages to me as the most informed and informative account of Greek material culture in Sicily currently available; and so they are, precisely because they do indeed incorporate *un sacco di inediti* - or, more prosaically, they make extensive use of material found in recent and not so recent excavations as yet not fully published. But this state of archaeological *vis-à-vis* adjacent disciplines. Would any literary scholar dream of assimilating the salient points of a newly discovered text into a standard history of literature before publishing an autonomous critical edition? In the present case, I have no doubt that the factual information contributed by the excavators is accurate, and that the due processes of selection and interpretation have been carried out with rigorous honesty. It remains true that readers can not always check these synthetic results against the detailed presentation of the primary evidence elsewhere. Only get worse, in Sicily as in the rest of Italy, immemorial Italian custom ensures that the definitive reports on excavations conducted under the auspices of the Superintendentes are submitted in the first instance to the editorial committee of the *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*, which, early last year, was forced by financial considerations to suspend all its archaeological series per il momento (gloomily but universally translated as *sine die*).

In the circumstances, we are extremely fortunate to have an archaeological synthesis of Greek Sicily conceived on this impressive scale. We are more fortunate still to be able to integrate its findings with the contents of Volume Two, Part One, which is physically the largest of these five tomes. Here, the history of the period between the sixth century and 210 BC is narrated by Gianfranco Maddoli, Maria Sordi, Sebastiano Cosola Langher and Giovanni De Sensi Sestito. The literature of the same period is in the equally capable hands of Graziano Argyrakis, and its art is reviewed by Giuseppe Voza (fifth century) and Filippo Coarelli (fourth and third centuries). The former scholar is also responsible for prehistoric archaeology in Volume One, a fact that neatly illustrates the breadth of learning required in a modern Italian Archaeological Superintendent.

Here then is the most authoritative and accessible set of "Materials for a History of Ancient Sicily" that we



Pendants of human heads - others are of devils, satyrs and rams - reproduced and described in a chapter by Veronica A. Tallon-Brown in the Catalogue of Greek and Roman Glass in the British Museum. Volume 1: Core and Rod-Formed Vessels and Pendants and Mycenaean Cast Objects by Donald B. Harden (235pp. British Museum Publications, £45, 0 7141 1262 3); that on the left bluish-green with dark blue eyebrows and eyes, greenish-yellow hair and beard applied separately, from Olympia in the Black Sea; that on the right brownish-purple with white face and eyeballs but similar hair, beard, eyebrows and pupils.

have, or are likely to have for a very long time. These magnificent volumes are a tribute to the high standard of French scholarship abroad and of Sicilian scholarship at home. From them, ancient historians will learn much in the archaeological sections, and vice versa; Sicilians will learn much about the non-Sicilian world, and vice versa; and non-combatants will derive a great deal of innocent pleasure from the numerous encounters with the *Realien* of ancient society.

In this latter respect, I think for example of the bill of sale of a fourth-century house recently discovered at Canarina by Paola Pelagatti, and collated with its context in Voza (fifth century) and Filippo Coarelli (fourth and third centuries). The former scholar is also responsible for prehistoric archaeology in Volume One, a fact that neatly illustrates the breadth of learning required in a modern Italian Archaeological Superintendent.

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it appears, was far less straightforward than the commonly presented account of hunter-gatherers (Palaeolithic and Mesolithic), followed by farmers invading from the east (Neolithic), warrior-herdsmen with more invasions - (Eneolithic), pastoralists (Early and Middle Bronze Age), ending up with farmers (Final Bronze Age). There was, often, in fact, considerable local variation in material culture and economy, while some so-called "cultures" were no variation in the raw materials used; for example, remained limited by its employment of beach pebbles, as did the Rinaldone rock-out tombs by suitable geological sites.

Transition from one stage to the next, too, was less than clear-cut, and there were many instances of continuity. According to Barker, the traditional "chest-of-drawers" approach to the definition of prehistoric cultures, in which finds are neatly ascribed to each clearly defined stage, has only perpetuated its own fallacies. He perhaps goes too far in denying the usefulness of traditional groupings, for although the Italy during the Neolithic, with several ceramic traditions coexisting (as is certainly the case in the Eneolithic over most of the peninsula) recent work in Northern Italy, contrary to what Barker maintains, shows that the Early and Middle Neolithic developed through a sequence of phases clearly defined by their own distinctive ceramic styles, which were not contemporary. The cultural approach may sometimes mislead; interpretation, but equally cultures may be defined and used as

Barker is, on the whole, well aware of the difficulties of applying many of the new interpretations to the often very inadequate archaeological evidence, and the whole tone of his approach is sensibly cautious. This book will do much to blow away the cobwebs, and point to new directions for research and interpretation.

Acres and pains

By Ronald Blythe

JEAN STOVIN (editor): *Journals of a Methodist Farmer 1871-1875*. 251pp. Croom Helm. £12.95. 0 7059 2324 4

The publication by Jean Stovin of her grandfather's journals, documents which have been consulted by agricultural historians for some time now, is a most welcome event. So often such nineteenth-century records are little more than a kind of highly personalized set of farm accounts. Not so with Cornelius Stovin, whose intention was always to bring the profit and loss account of his fields, to the point where it would receive the approval, not of Sir Edmund Beckett, his landlord, but of Christ. Thus we have one of the most intimate and self-revealing of farmers' diaries, a book which throws an astonishing light across the mid-Victorian rural scene. The sight of one of those stiff little village chapels recalls not such matters as the Nonconformist conscience or vernacular architecture, but its God-chanted priests, complex figures like Stovin who longed "to throw my form into the treasury of Christ".

He did not succeed, of course. Confronted by an ill and down-trodden wife, an implacable class system, which left him isolated in the neighbourhood, an outlook formed by an addiction to reading, and the first rumblings of the great disaster which was to ruin British farming for decades to come, Stovin was obliged to take the usual worldly measures. But during the four years covered by the *Journals*, the complexity resulting from the contrast between what he knew he should do, and what he was able to do, gave his life a dramatic edge which goes far beyond that which one associates with such an existence.

Stovin had farmed Binbrook Hall, Lincolnshire, for twenty years before he began writing about it. The whole of his youth had been spent in drugging it out of its stagnation and in perfecting his preaching. These two activities, his acres and his Methodistism, were for him an undivided path, which, by 1870, when he was thirty, appeared at last to have become unified. Thus, when he begins his first

Journal during the harvest of 1871 (prompted perhaps by a pamphlet about Bunyan), he is all praise and confidence. Newly invented machinery speeds the field work. The weather is glorious. His wife and his foreman are - and here follow puny references to memorial stones. A lighted window at night gives a glimpse of a labourer and his wife at prayer. He has leisure for reading his greatest passion) and is uncharacteristically absorbed in a novel, *Louisa*. His wife is poorly but "Never fail" is "written on her banner". As for his men, were there ever such workers? "The sheaves seemed almost to fly from the ground to the wagon and from the wagon to the stack." Mr Gladstone has made a just and powerful criticism of the landed interest.

But then all kinds of woes begin to emerge from the hazy of holy toil. To the historian they are inevitable, and it is proof of Stovin's truthfulness and lack of self-deception that he notes down all the first small indications of a collapsing agricultural economy, combined with a subtle alteration in the thinking and attitude of its workers. To the writer, many of them must have seemed like peculiar, unrelated incidents; to the reader today they are vivid evidence of his sensitivity. During the winter of 1872, for example, two of his labourers come to the door to ask him to raise their wages just when he has been boasting that his kindness as an employer saved him from such an expense. One of the labourers gives notice and Stovin "came in the house confused with grief and consternation. I felt injured by his ingratitude. I considered and followed him into the yard. He softened in his manner but held firmly to his own terms." All over the country "they are farming themselves into organic companies for the purpose of dictating their own terms." This unnerving independence shown by his men highlights the "grossly servile prostration" of tenant farmers like himself before absentee sporting landlords who are putting up the rent. He feels deserted by both sides, which indeed he is.

The *Journals* continue with Stovin struggling hard to correct the social and economic forces which are creating the imbalance at Binbrook. Parallel with his transparently honest description of these, are accounts of equally acknowledged fulfilment. Although his man "seem to have set

their forces like flint against work" and "are advancing in intelligence and folding their arms simultaneously", although the farmhouse is damp and badly run due to Mrs Stovin's sickness ("the world had proved a very sharp grindstone to her"), although weeds and Sir Edmund's coverts diminish his crops and his waggoners are singing, not the glories of Zion but obscene songs in the yard and most frightening of all, although, despite all his efforts, by 1876 he is in debt to the tune of £1,635, he is as capable in his way of responding to the countryside as thankfully as Kilver.



Early seventeenth-century English plough forms, reproduced from *Our Forgotten Past: Seven Centuries of Life on the Land*, edited by Jerome Blum (240pp, with 256 illustrations. £12.50, 0 500 25080 4) to be published by Thames and Hudson on March 29.

Where there's muck

By Kenneth Mellanby

FRASER HARRISON: *Strange Land The Countryside, Myth and Reality*. 133pp. Sidgwick and Jackson. £7.95. 0 283 98838 X

Fraser Harrison differs from the many writers who deplore the changes in agricultural practice which have so damaged our wildlife, as well as the effects of modern industrialized farming on the appearance of much of rural Britain. He admits that the landscape which reached its climax in the Edwardian era, as the cumulative effect of the enclosures and other developments in the previous two centuries, was beautiful, and that we are right to deplore the destruction of many of its features. But he insists that this beauty was corrupt, and that it was produced as a result of the sufferings of the rural poor. The countryside, he says, was run for the benefit of a tiny number of agrarian capitalists who still exercise a predominant and stultifying influence on rural life. He believes that we must acknowledge this before we can produce something better.

Harrison goes on to make his case in an unusual way. He describes his childhood on his grandfather's progressive Welsh farm, though as a young man he seems to have taken no interest in the countryside, in farming or in wildlife. This is a damning admission, for as a rule those who become progressive conservationists as adults were obsessed with animals and plants from their earliest childhood. It is therefore difficult not to doubt the reality of this author's feeling for the countryside.

We are next given a description of the Suffolk village in which Fraser Harrison now lives; he makes it seem a horrible place, of which he is not a part. This description is followed by a long chapter on the pig, described in the blurb as "a metaphor of the natural processes of growth which are commonplace in an agricultural society". This may be the intention; it is not communicated to the reader.

Following the flow

By Alwyne Wheeler

ANTHONY BURTON: *The Changing River*. 158pp. Gollancz. £9.95. 0 575 02967 6

There can be few people who do not like rivers. Perhaps it is an elemental part of man's nature that invests a river with a quality which arrests attention and leads us "to stand and stare", be it ever so briefly. Even the signs naming the rivers that one traverses on the motorway bring brief glimpses of sanity and a natural world to counteract the thunder of tyres and surfeit of adrenalin. Further pleasure lies in the vast number of books about rivers and the place they hold in memory: these include the writings of Kenneth Grahame and Jerome K. Jerrold.

Anthony Burton has contributed most nobly to this literature. His theme is the role that rivers have played in the development of society in Britain, but within this there are many delightful sketches and accounts of individual rivers, some followed from their source to their mouth. The relationship between rivers and early human habitation in Britain is indisputable - so many early sites are beside rivers or watery localities. The important Mesolithic site at Star Carr in Yorkshire of perhaps 9,500 years ago was on a swampy site at the head of the River Derwent, though this is at variance with Burton's suggestion that the earliest settlement was in the uplands not in the river valleys.

Burton elegantly provides information on many aspects of river life and development during the Middle Ages by reference to the numerous riverine characters in the *Canterbury Tales*; the Knight whose fortress can be supposed often to have guarded the bridge or ford crossing at a river; the Priestess, Monk and Friar whose establishments were sited beside rivers for the sake of peace and seclusion, for power for the mill, or the grazing on the floodplains; and the Miller who depended on flowing water for his power.

Later centuries were to see rivers become major thoroughfares for the carriage of goods, and gradually to be tamed by flash locks, pound locks, and dams for power. Eventually industry was attracted to the river bank, first for the sake of the power it offered, then for its cooling capacities (some electricity generating stations still cool their turbines with river water). Examples like the silk mills of the River Derwent at Derby, the cotton mills at the Derwent, and the textile area of Lancashire, but the making of whisky is as much a river-side industry as any of these more industrial processes and Mr Burton dwells lovingly on its production.

The Changing River presents a bird's-eye view of Britain's history related to its rivers. Bridges, navigation, ferries, fishing, mills, drinking water, sewage disposal, shipbuilding, industry, are all described in sufficient detail to sketch in the broad picture without obscuring the story with over-emphasis. This is both a delightful and an informative book for river-lovers and shows the author's wide knowledge of and fascination by flowing water.

statements such as that, as a result of the loss of tropical forests, our oxygen supply would be so reduced that mankind would perish from "universal asphyxia". Of course the loss of the Amazonian forests is a tragedy, particularly the extinction of so many unrecorded species of plants and animals, with the damage to delicate soils and to the human populations; but fortunately oxygen deficiency is one of the least likely results.

Fraser Harrison is almost entirely destructive. With few practical suggestions for the genesis of a countryside of "cooperative creativity". There are some ill-directed swipes at modern farming, but no practical idea for its reformation. This is perhaps because the author, as his childhood memories illustrate, is not really involved in rural problems, but only in political extrapolations based on his peculiar interpretations of how the traditional British landscape developed, and what is happening to it today.

Valued Environments

Edited by John Gold and Jacquelin Burgess

People care about places. Local inhabitants demand more participation in the changes proposed for their environments; activists urge greater protection of the countryside and natural environments; planners and decision-makers feel threatened by the antagonism aroused by their powers and plans. The contributors to this book investigate why we place such value on our local landscape in both town and country.

Contributors: Jacquelin Burgess, John Gold, Brian Goodey, Marlon Shoard, David Lowenthal, John V. Painter, Stephen Daniels, Katherine A. Oliver, Susan Ann Lee, Derek R. Hall, David L. Uzzell. Publication date: April 29th 1982. 224 pp. 0 047100001 X. Hardback £15.00.

George Allen & Unwin (Publishers) Ltd PO Box 18 Park Lane, Hemel Hempstead Herts HP2 4TE. TJS 3631

Putting people into places

By Arnold Beichman

G. CALVIN MACKENZIE:
The Politics of Presidential
Appointments
298pp. Collier Macmillan. £10.95.
0 02 919670 t

The creating of a new government after a national election, particularly after an incumbent government has been ousted, always poses a problem. Within the past few years, elections in five Western democracies - Britain, Canada, the United States, France and Sweden - have voted opposition parties into power. In four of the countries, the transition was fairly simple and caused little stir - except, perhaps, in France because of President Mitterrand's inclusion of four Communists in the government. But as the French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson told President Reagan in June, when he moved into the Quil D'Orsay: "All the people were in place, and I just got down to work." One could almost hear the envious sigh as President Reagan said to Cheysson: "Well, you're a lucky man."

It is only in the United States, where the power of appointment is shared between the President and the Senate, that the process of changing administrations not infrequently results in debate, confrontation, investigation, and sometimes in tense drama. The nomination of Bert Lance in the early days of the Carter Administration was a case in point. So was the recent affair of Ernest LeFevre, named by President Reagan as Assistant Secretary of State. Both nominations were withdrawn when it became apparent that the Senate would not confirm the nominees.

G. Calvin MacKenzie, in his excellently researched study, lists a number of reasons for this state of affairs. Firstly, when a nomination is sent up from the White House to the Senate, and thence to the appropriate Senate committee for its recommendation back to the full Senate, the ensuing public hearing is an ideal opportunity for Senators to air their grievances about Administration policy. The LeFevre imbroglio (which occurred after the publication of the present volume in the United States) was a way of telling President Reagan how some Senators felt about the new Administration's views on human rights.

Another reason is that apart from specialists in a given field or a special interest group, most Presidents appoint people nobody has ever heard of, even though the qualifica-

tions and talents of such appointees may be extraordinarily high. Hugo Hefco's book about American politics was well named: *A Government of Strangers*. President Reagan's entire Cabinet, with the exception of General Haig, was unheard of prior to its nomination. The same is true of most of Carter's appointees. It wasn't considered at all odd (although it turned out to be quite funny) that Hamilton Jordan, one of Carter's closest advisers, should glory in the unknowns to be appointed in 1976.

If, after the inauguration, you find a Cy Vance as Secretary of State, and Zbigniew Brzezinski as head of national security, then I would say we failed. And I'd quit. But that's not going to happen. You're going to see new faces, new ideas. The government is going to be run by people you have never heard of.

(In the event, both Vance and Brzezinski were appointed, the Carter Administration did fail and Jordan didn't quit in protest. Still there were a great many new faces, even though there weren't shining new ideas.)

It is not unusual for a President to appoint someone to his Cabinet whom he has never met. Such was the case, for example, with President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Interior Secretary Harold Ickes, and President John F. Kennedy and Secretary of State Dean Rusk. It is quite customary for the new Cabinet members of an incoming Administration to meet for the first time at their swearing-in ceremonies or at the first Cabinet session. American newspapers often have great difficulty in preparing those potted biographical "profiles" about the new appointees, simply because their "morgues" have so few cuttings about them. As MacKenzie points out, "Administrations are constructed after Presidents are elected, not before."

In addition, Presidential candidates, for all the years of campaigning leading up to their election, don't really know many people outside their immediate circle. President Kennedy once said: "I thought I knew everybody but it turned out I only knew a few politicians." His personnel adviser, Dan Fenn Jr., used an acronym, "BOGSAT", to describe the earlier White House recruitment system, meaning "a bunch of guys sitting around a table" asking each other, "Whom do you know?" President Nixon's personnel officer, a man with no experience, sent out a form letter to all 80,000 people listed in *Who's Who in America* asking them to recommend candidates for appointments. Some 60,000 replies were received; each recommended

candidate was then asked to send in a résumé of his career. According to MacKenzie, Nixon's adviser was merely trying to extend the list of potential candidates. Some appointments did apparently result from this *Who's Who* experiment, but MacKenzie wonders who people like Elvis Presley or Casey Stengel, the baseball manager, might have recommended for high office.

In Britain or Canada the parliamentary system makes choosing a new government simpler than it is in the United States, which operates under a presidential-congressional system of, in Richard Neustadt's phrase, separated institutions sharing powers. There is always a shadow government on the Opposition benches in Westminster or Ottawa, its members more or less known quantities and ready to take over the day after being elected. In the United States it is now something like seventy-five days before a newly elected President takes office and weeks, sometimes months, before his nominees move in. Before 1933, when an amendment to the Constitution was ratified, the interregnum used to run from early November to early March.

As a work of political science MacKenzie's book has many virtues, as is to be expected from a student of Samuel Beer. Its weakness lies in the prescriptions for reform of the system. Here the author violates my First Law of Democratic Politics: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." The author wants to cure what he calls the "systemic pathologies" in the appointment process. The therapy won't work, as the author half-concedes, because conflict and confrontation are so built into the process as to make them virtually ineradicable.

The reason for this is that everybody has a right, and in the case of the United States Senate, a constitutional right, to intervene in the case of any one of the 50,000-70,000 nominations which the President sends up to the Senate each year for confirmation. In terms of *le pays légal*, the President is responsible for several hundred thousand appointments throughout the national government. Most of these appointments are routine and therefore never get to the Senate; the power of appointment is then vested in the President alone, although he plays no active role in such appointments.

The real concern of the President and his personnel staff is how to find the "best" person for the Cabinet and sub-Cabinet jobs, for the independent agencies, regulatory commissions, directors of government corporations, ambassadors to major

posts and the Federal judges. These amount to some 500-600 positions, about half of which come under Senate scrutiny. The selection of nominees is dominated by the President, their confirmation by the Senate. That, too, is the way it is in *le pays légal*. But in terms of *le pays réel*, the confirmation and nomination processes must include other important but extra-constitutional influences - the career bureaucracies in Cabinet departments and other Federal agencies, which Arthur Schlesinger has called "the permanent government". Then there are the patronage-hungry political parties, and members of the House of Representatives.

Some Presidents have hated their appointive role; others have accepted it with resignation. William Howard Taft once remarked mournfully that "Every time I make an appointment, I create nine enemies and one friend." Lyndon Johnson engaged John W. Macy Jr as his personnel appointments officer and established for him criteria in making selection decisions. Even so, there were complaints, to which Johnson would utter a pious disclaimer: "Well, don't blame me. It's that Ood damn Macy. He insists on having merit."

Another reason for the occasional disruption of the nomination-confirmation process is that what may be in the interests of a new and transient Chief Executive is not necessarily in the self-defined interest of "the permanent government". Anyone who has read the Crossman Diaries knows of the clashes between the Minister and his civil servants and understands how normal is the disjunction of interest between a strong-willed political Minister and an equally strong-willed Permanent Secretary. In the United States this problem is magnified because the bureaucracies usually have their own close lateral connections with an appropriate Congressional committee. This may explain why Vice-President Charles G. Dawes once noted that the President's natural enemies are the members of his own Cabinet, since the civil servants generally take over the running of the department and the Cabinet member as well.

In addition, there is the normal reluctance of qualified people to accept government service, often because it would mean a cut in earnings. "Our problem" said a White House recruiter in 1974, "is to get people who are earning \$350,000 a year to come to work for \$38,000." Any investments which might create a conflict of interest have to be sold or put in a "blind trust" during government service, and a binding, legally enforceable pledge given not

to accept employment for several years in any industry after leaving government service. There is also the date of the FBI of the candidate's past. But in spite of all this one of the most popular books in Washington, published by a House committee each time a new President is elected, is entitled *U.S. Government Policy and Supporting Positions*. According to MacKenzie, it is known colloquially as the "Pink Book", both because of the one-line colour of its cover and because the positions listed in the book are regarded as political plums.

MacKenzie's proposed remedies for the appointive process are beyond objection in their intention and spirit but could only work if Presidents and Senators were angels. For example, the author wants appointments to be made on merit, and for there to be "a commitment to qualify on the part of the people who control the process". Yet he accepts that there is no "substantial consensus on the criteria that qualify individuals for presidential appointments". He more or less negates his call that appointments should be made on the basis of merit, by suggesting that the Senate ought occasionally to instruct the President explicitly as to what sector of the population or profession or economic class a nominee to a Federal post ought to come from. MacKenzie wants to reduce the appointment process to "a set of systematic generalizations" and thereby to eliminate complexity and unpredictability.

But the authors of the Constitution deliberately set out to make predictability impossible. They originally set up four different methods for selecting the leaders of the three branches of government: the President was to be chosen indirectly by an independent Electoral College, a method which time and tradition have altered; the judiciary was to be chosen by the President with the consent of the Senate; the Senators themselves were to be elected by the State Legislatures; and the House of Representatives was to be elected by popular vote. What could be more confusing? Somehow the appointive system has worked for almost two centuries, except by the exacting standards of contemporary social science. Perhaps one should recall the wise words of Professor Edward Benfield:

A political system is an accident... If the system works for almost two centuries, well on the whole, it is a lucky accident - the luckiest, indeed, that can befall a society... To meddle with the structure and operation of a successful political system is therefore the greatest foolishness that men are capable of.

communist goodwill towards democracy, based on competitive elections and coalition government, lasted until mid to late 1947. Most communist officials saw democracy as merely a slow and gradual rather than a rapid and revolutionary road to absolute power. They had a highly instrumental view of parliamentary democracy and thus did not hesitate to use mass pressure tactics and unconstitutional bodies such as the Action Committee and the People's Militia (the Communist Party's private army), whose significance Myant tends to underestimate.

The non-communist parties, on the other hand, continued to play the political game by traditional democratic rules. It was this strategic error, as well as the policy handicaps and organizational weaknesses which Myant highlights, that made non-communists so politically ineffective. After February 1948, when their rather naive attempt to force a constitutional crisis by offering to resign from the coalition was eagerly seized upon by the communists to engineer a takeover of power, non-communist leaders were rapidly and forcibly removed from political life. Myant provides a useful account of the emergence of political dictatorship in the wake of the February takeover, yet it

casts further doubt on his general interpretation of communist thinking. Of course Soviet pressure was once again important; Stalin's advice, and the "advisers" he dispatched to Czechoslovakia, certainly made the purges more extensive and extreme than they might otherwise have been. But it is difficult to accept that the actual policy of eliminating all political opposition was largely imposed from outside on communist leaders whose receptivity to such ideas was due to a misguided acceptance of the "oversimplified version of Marxism" propagated by Moscow.

This is an interesting study of an important subject. Those concerned with the origins of communist rule should read this book even if they are likely to emerge unconvinced by its thesis that the Czechoslovak communists' road to socialism was paved with good democratic intentions.

Elites in France: Origins, Reproduction and Power (253pp, Frances Pinter, £13.95, 0 903804 90 5) is edited by Jolyon Howorth and Philip G. Cerny and has an introduction by Douglas Johnson. Among the contributors is 'The Ecole Normale Supérieure and its elite formation and selection during the Third Republic' by Jean-François Sirinelli.

Avian adoptions

By Christopher Lever

JOHN L. LONG:
Introduced Birds of the World
538pp. Newton Abbot: David and Charles. £15.
0 7153 8180 6

This scholarly, authoritative and well-researched book is the first to provide a comprehensive account of all man's attempts to introduce birds outside their natural range - both successfully and unsuccessfully - throughout the world. It is a landmark in its field, which has hitherto been a much neglected branch of ornithology.

Why has man sought to alter artificially the natural distribution of birds? The reasons are many and various; nineteenth-century colonists of the Antipodes took with them song-birds as nostalgic reminders of home; many species have been translocated for aesthetic reasons, while gamebirds have been reared and released for sporting purposes; some birds have been introduced to new countries to combat insect pests - themselves often the result of unintentional introductions by man; others have become established after escaping or being released from captivity, while yet more have travelled from country to country as stowaways on board ship.

Unfortunately, many introduced birds have become serious pests in their adoptive homelands; in some cases they compete with native species for food and nesting sites, while in others they are vectors of parasites and diseases. In some countries the genetic purity of native species - which may already be rare - is endangered by hybridization with the newcomers. Agricultural damage - and this economic loss - has been caused all over the world by alien granivorous birds. Nor can exotics be relied on to remain in one place; the European starling and the house sparrow, for example, have successfully colonized most of North America from initial liberations in the eastern United States.

In spite of this somewhat gloomy picture, the majority of introduced birds have had a more or less neutral effect on their new surroundings, though very few - in Britain the insectivorous little owl is a notable exception - have proved positively beneficial. The breeding of endangered species in captivity for ultimate reintroduction to the wild is a valuable tool in the hands of the conservationist; the classic example of this is the re-establishment in Hawaii of the native or Hawaiian goose, which was saved from near

extinction by the Wildfowl Trust in Britain.

In format John Long's invaluable book is both encyclopedic and comprehensive: an individual section, divided into a number of sub-headings, is devoted to each species; those describing distinguishing characteristics, general and introduced distributions, and general habits are kept to a minimum since, as Long points out, further details are easily available; to find these, references to recently published papers and to coloured illustrations of every species are provided; finally, information is given on the ecological impact, if any, of each alien bird on its new environment.

The bulk of each section gives detailed information, arranged systematically country by country, on the histories of the various introductions. Maps in the text show at a glance the natural distribution, introduced range, direction of migration - if any - and the success or failure of each introduction. Attractive and accurate line-drawings (some depicting only a detail) by Susan Tingay of most species (primarily those which have been introduced successfully) enhance the text. Tables showing introductions of individual avian families and a lengthy bibliography listing more than 2,000 references are also included.

A number of textual misprints in the sections describing birds introduced to the British Isles suggest the likelihood of others elsewhere, but this is well-nigh unavoidable in a work of this magnitude. Errors and omissions - again almost inevitable - seem to be few; the map for the American woodcock erroneously implies that this species is successfully established in Scotland, while that for the capercaillie - now thriving in the central and eastern Highlands of Scotland as the result of re-introductions in the nineteenth century - suggests a successful introduction to England.

My only real criticism - albeit perhaps a somewhat carping one - is the inclusion of a large number of introduced species which have failed to become successfully established; this seems of doubtful value and interest and tends to blur the overall picture; since many unsuccessful and unrecorded introductions have surely been attempted all over the world it must also increase the risk of omission.

These, however, are minor points and in no way detract from the immense value of this important reference book. All credit to the Australian publishers, A. H. and A. W. Reed, who, in collaboration with the author's employees - the Agriculture Protection Board of Western Australia - have together produced a book of the highest quality which is a pleasure to handle.

Muddled molluscs

By Jean Mellanby

The Macdonald Encyclopedia of Shells
512pp. Macdonald, £4.95.
6 356 08575 9

The Macdonald Encyclopedia of Shells (translated from the Italian and prepared for the United States market), has many of some strengths and weaknesses as its companion volume *The Macdonald Encyclopedia of Trees*. As a compendium of detailed and technical notes on about 400 species in 357 entries about shells - that is, molluscs - with illustrations, coloured plates and distribution maps, it ought to be invaluable. Unfortunately, all the information is presented in such a way as to make it almost unusable. To identify any shell, unless you already know its scientific name, you would have to leaf through the entire volume. It is tedious to describe it as "an easy-to-use field guide" or as "the essential guide for beginners and experts alike".

Although recognizing their own method as unsatisfactory, the anonymous authors group their molluscs under five headings: (1) soft-surface molluscs, occurring in sand, mud and aquatic vegetation; (2) firm-surface molluscs, occurring in rocks, gravel and oyster beds; (3) coral dwellers; (4) other marine molluscs; (5) land and fresh-water molluscs. Within each group the entries are listed alphabetically, under the scientific name; regardless of class, order, or family. This makes for great confusion. The entry *Octopus vulgaris*, the common octopus, is followed by *Osirea edulis*, the edible oyster, though the latter O. If it is felt necessary to remove all the scaffolding of academic classification, some other intelligible framework is required; but not given here. Moreover, as the authors try to deal with shells from every part of the world, they cannot deal adequately with any one part in a way helpful to the local collector. Only a very few of the most common British species are mentioned. The serious student needs something better than this; the general reader will be baffled and the young collector all

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in Government Departments

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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
Institute of Army Education, Wandsworth, London SW18.
Royal College of Defence Studies, Balgare Square, London SW1.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY
Main Library, Alexander Fleming House, Elephant and Castle, London SE1.

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT
Health and Safety Executive Library, Sheffield.
Further vacancies may arise in these and other Departments.

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For further details and an application form (to be returned by 13 April, 1982) write to Civil Service Commission, Alencon Link, Basingstoke, Hants, RG21 1JB, or telephone Basingstoke (0256) 88551 (answering service operates outside office hours). Please quote ref: G(1)824.

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Salary scale ITES639-8,388 (under review).
Further particulars may be obtained from the Secretary and Bureau Administrator, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4, where applications, together with curriculum vitae and the names and addresses of two referees, should be sent by Friday, April 16th, 1982.

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Salary scale £5,110-£5,804 per annum.
Further particulars and application forms can be obtained from the Appointment Section, Common Services Agency, Trinity Park, Basingstoke, Hants, RG21 1JB, or telephone Basingstoke (0256) 88551 (answering service operates outside office hours). Please quote ref: G(1)824.

GENERAL VACANCIES

Victoria and Albert Museum Curator in the National Art Library

This post carries special responsibility for the Library's collections of manuscripts which include illuminated and calligraphic texts from the 12th to the 20th centuries, and an important collection of manuscript material relating to the history and techniques of fine and decorative arts. Work includes giving advice on acquisitions and dealing with relevant outside organisations. Occasional Saturday duties involved.

The person appointed will be expected to be, or to become, an authority on illumination and calligraphy, and will be required to improve and develop the collections and manuscripts.

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For further details and an application form (to be returned by 30 March, 1982) write to Civil Service Commission, Alencon Link, Basingstoke, Hants, RG21 1JB, or telephone Basingstoke (0256) 88551 (answering service operates outside office hours). Please quote ref: G(1)822.

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The Trustees invite applications for the above post. The person appointed will be responsible for the administration, management and supervision of the entire institution and its staff.

The post is a full-time appointment on the scale £17,052 (x7) - £21,220 (under review).

Further information is available from:
The Chester Beatty Library
The Gallery of Oriental Art,
20 Bhowasary Road,
Dublin 4.

Closing date for receipt of applications is 30 April, 1982.

SCOTTISH HEALTH SERVICE COMMON SERVICES AGENCY Building Division Librarian

Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates for the above post. Candidates should have the ability and experience to manage and develop the Division's library services to meet the needs of all professions engaged in the planning and construction of health buildings. Building library experience and knowledge of the Health Service would be an advantage. The Librarian will be based at the headquarters office in Glasgow, but will have responsibility for the smaller libraries in the local offices of the Division in Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen and Glasgow. Salary Scale £5,110-£5,804 per annum. Further particulars and application forms can be obtained from the Appointment Section, Common Services Agency, Trinity Park, Basingstoke, Hants, RG21 1JB, or telephone Basingstoke (0256) 88551 (answering service operates outside office hours). Please quote ref: G(1)825.

Closing date for receipt of completed applications is 30 March 1982. Please quote reference 041713/6.

NORTH LONDON POLYTECHNIC OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES LIBRARY ASSISTANT

Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates for the post of Library Assistant.

The duties include work in the areas of lending services, book care, periodicals and cataloguing.

Successful candidates must have a pleasant and outgoing manner, be able to work under pressure, and have a good knowledge of the library service. An ability to communicate clearly is also an important requirement.

A degree is not essential, but a good education (to GCSE level minimum) is necessary.

This post is not suitable for those who have library or information qualifications, and/or who are over 30.

Salary scale: £4,880 - £6,316 inclusive of London Allowance.

Notes: (1) please do not send application form and curriculum vitae to the Librarian, Polytechnic of North London, 100, Holloway Road, London N7 8DB.

The closing date for completed applications is 30 March 1982. Please quote ref: G(1)826.

Driven to dictatorship

By Alex Pravda

M. R. MYANTI
Socialism and Democracy in
Czechoslovakia
1945-1948
302pp. Cambridge University Press.
£20.
0 521 23668 1

For Western leaders the communist assumption of power in Czechoslovakia in February 1948 signalled the continuation of Soviet domination in Eastern Europe. For students of communism, take-over these events have always posed a problem since they were the outcome neither of direct Soviet military intervention nor of domestic communist revolution. For many communists in Eastern Europe and the West the significance of the period 1945-48 in Czechoslovakia lies in its combination of socialism with democracy.

If it is this last consideration which most concerns Martin Myant in the present volume, the fullest and best documented study to have appeared in English on the 1945-48 period, he does not do himself justice by devoting so little space to discussing them.

thosia of conspiratorial subversion of democracy by the communists and the Communist Party view of 1948 as the culmination of a popular democratic revolution. Looking heavily on the work of revisionist Czech historians published in the 1960s, Myant argues that the 1945-48 period had the makings of a new model of socialism suited to an advanced industrial country with democratic traditions. The novelty of the Czechoslovak road to socialism lay in the fact that revolutionary social and economic changes were introduced by a freely elected coalition government led but not ruled by the communists. Up to the middle of 1947, Myant contends, the communists genuinely tried to make this democratic socialism work. Only thereafter did external pressures, resulting from deteriorating East-West relations, divert Czech and Slovak communists from their electoral power-sharing path.

Myant is undoubtedly right to emphasize the change in climate after the middle of 1947. We know that Stalin exerted pressure on Oostwald to hasten a complete takeover of power by the Communist Party. In view of the weight Myant attaches to external factors, he devotes surprisingly little space to discussing them.

When he does so, more time is spent on United States than on Soviet policy towards Czechoslovakia. On the crucial question, however, of whether the middle of 1947 marked a turning-point, a departure in communist strategy and tactics the book contains much interesting material and some perceptive analysis. Both on this point and the evolution of communist thinking, Myant argues convincingly that communist policy here was ambiguous and reflected differences of opinion within the Party itself. Evidence from the Czechoslovak Party archives - recently published by Karel Kaplan, a Czech historian now working in Munich - confirms that disagreements on strategy and tactics persisted throughout this period. But what the archives also reveals is that behind closed doors "moderate" leaders such as Gottwald were far less equivocal than in public about the need to use democratic instruments, such as elections, for the elimination of all political opposition to communist supremacy. And while Myant did not have access to such sources, even the published evidence he does points in the same direction. Only by interpreting statements by Gottwald and other leaders in a very charitable fashion is he able to maintain that

communist goodwill towards democracy, based on competitive elections and coalition government, lasted until mid to late 1947. Most communist officials saw democracy as merely a slow and gradual rather than a rapid and revolutionary road to absolute power. They had a highly instrumental view of parliamentary democracy and thus did not hesitate to use mass pressure tactics and unconstitutional bodies such as the Action Committee and the People's Militia (the Communist Party's private army), whose significance Myant tends to underestimate.

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